



OUT-OF-PROVINCE INPATIENT TREATMENT FOR SPECIALIZED MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES

PROVINCIAL POLICY

This policy sets out the application process for out-of-province (OOP) and out-of-country (OOC) inpatient treatment for specialized mental health and addictions services. The Department of Health and Community Services, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, is responsible for final approval of all requests for OOP and OOC inpatient treatment. Applications will be considered if all criteria and requirements are met as outlined in this policy.

Out-of-Province Inpatient Treatment Criteria

- Requests for OOP inpatient treatment for specialized mental health and addictions services will be considered for approval when **all** the following have been met:
 - Local services have been fully utilized and additional, more intensive, services are required;
 - Local services have been deemed unsuitable to meet the needs of the person, or the referring clinician (i.e. psychiatrist, family physician, psychologist, social worker, counsellor or nurse) determines services required are not available locally;
 - The accepting inpatient treatment facility is fully accredited by a recognized accreditation body;
 - A follow-up plan and health care contact has been established for ongoing outpatient treatment and support when the person returns to the province; and
 - The Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions, NL Health Services, or designate, has reviewed the OOP treatment request and is in full support of it.

- Approved substance use treatment facilities under the Federal Government's National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) are considered equivalent to in-province treatment for people who identify as Indigenous. Therefore, Indigenous applicants may access NNADAP treatment without the requirement to participate in local inpatient programs first.

- There may be exceptional circumstances that require a person to access specialized mental health services and addictions treatment outside the province to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. These are specific cases that require pre-approval by NL Health Services and the Department Health and Community Services.
- Requests for OOP treatment for concurrent mental health and addictions issues (e.g. trauma and substance use) where the need for psychiatry is not clinically indicated may be considered if the applicable Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions, NL Health Services, confirms support for the request and the recommended OOP treatment program.
- Requests for OOP treatment for children and youth will only be considered for approval by the Department of Health and Community Services as a very last resort when all other efforts to develop and provide an appropriate in-province treatment plan have proven unsuccessful and is confirmed by the applicable Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions, NL Health Services.

Out-of-Country Inpatient Treatment Criteria

- Requests for OOC inpatient treatment for specialized mental health and addictions services will be considered for approval when **all** the following have been met:
 - Services within the province and the rest of Canada have been exhausted and/or the required treatment is not available;
 - The accepting inpatient treatment facility outside of Canada has ready access to medical professionals and is fully accredited;
 - The service requested is an insured service and not one that is experimental or currently undergoing a trial; and
 - The OOC inpatient treatment application package contains letters of support from a discipline-appropriate, locally based health specialist, as well as one practicing in Canada (but outside this province) confirming there are no appropriate local or nationwide services available.
- Requests for OOC treatment for children and youth will only be considered for approval by the Department of Health and Community Services as a very last resort when all other efforts to develop and provide an appropriate in-province or in-country treatment plan have proven unsuccessful and is confirmed by the applicable Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions, NL Health Services.
- Applicants shall be advised of the recommendation to carry additional medical insurance when travelling outside Canada as emergency services covered are only those deemed essential in unforeseen or unanticipated situations that require urgent medical care.

Out-of-Province / Out-of-Country Treatment Application Process

- To initiate the OOP or OOC inpatient treatment application process, the referring clinician shall contact the treatment facility of choice to obtain the intake assessment, treatment program recommendation, length of stay and total cost.

- Once the letter of tentative acceptance to the OOP or OOC treatment facility pending funding approval has been received, the referring clinician shall seek approval from the applicable Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions, NL Health Services.
- The OOP or OOC inpatient treatment request shall be submitted to the Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions, and include the following information:
 - Applicant's name, MCP number, date of birth, and mailing/street address;
 - Referring clinician's address, phone number and email address;
 - Detailed rationale for the OOP or OOC treatment request;
 - Brief medical history, including past and current utilization of appropriate local services and past OOP or OOC treatment, if applicable;
 - Appropriate letters of support from other local treatment team members (i.e. psychiatrist, psychologist, addictions counsellor);
 - Treatment facility name, address and phone number;
 - Program length of stay, daily per diem cost and total treatment cost; and
 - Follow-up treatment plan and clinician contact for the applicant upon return to the province.
- OOP or OOC inpatient treatment related questions and funding approval requests can be forwarded to MHAOoPReferrals@nlhealthservices.ca.
- If the OOP or OOC treatment funding request is denied at the Zone level, the Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions, or designate, will notify the referring clinician of the rationale for the denial and advise of other treatment options available.
- If approved by the applicable Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions, NL Health Services, the OOP or OOC treatment application package shall be forwarded to the Provincial Director of Mental Health and Addictions, or designate, Department of Health and Community Services, for review and approval.
- Upon final approval by the Provincial Director of Mental Health and Addictions, or designate, the OOP or OOC treatment application shall be forwarded to the Insured Services Division of the Department of Health and Community Services for processing.
- Once processed, the Insured Services Division shall send the approval letter to the Provincial Director of Mental Health and Addictions, or designate, to be forwarded to the treatment facility and applicable Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions. It is the Zone Director's responsibility to forward the approval letter to the referring clinician, who shall then notify the applicant of the approval.
- All arrangements for OOP or OOC treatment shall be the responsibility of the referring clinician, in consultation with the accepting treatment facility and NL Health Services.

- Approved OOP or OOC treatment shall be paid by the Insured Services Division at the standard ward rate per diem for the treatment facility for the duration of the program. Private rooms shall not be covered unless under exceptional circumstances, and only with the pre-approval of both the Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions and Provincial Director of Mental Health and Addictions, or designate.

Request for Extension or Program Change

- Program extensions or changes recommended by the OOP or OOC treatment facility must first be discussed with the referring clinician and applicable Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions, NL Health Services.
- To avoid approval and processing delays, the treatment facility shall contact the referring clinician as early as possible, at least one week in advance, to advise of this request for extension or program change.
- If supported by the Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions, a letter of support from the Zone Director, as well as a letter with rationale from the treatment facility, that includes updated cost and length of stay, shall be sent as a priority as soon as possible to the Provincial Director of Mental Health and Addictions, or designate, for consideration and approval.
- Upon final approval by the Provincial Director of Mental Health and Addictions, or designate, the OOP or OOC treatment application shall be forwarded to the Insured Services Division of the Department of Health and Community Services for processing.
- Once processed, the Insured Services Division shall send the approval letter to the Provincial Director of Mental Health and Addictions, or designate, to be forwarded to the treatment facility and applicable Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions. It is the Zone Director's responsibility to forward the approval letter to the referring clinician, who shall then notify the applicant of the approval.

Delayed Admission and Readmission

- If an applicant seeks admission to a program from which they received prior approval within the last six months but were unable to attend (i.e. medically unwell), a change in admission date can be considered in collaboration with the referring clinician, accepting treatment facility, applicable Zone Director for Mental Health and Addictions, and Provincial Director of Mental Health and Addictions, or designate.
- If an applicant seeks readmission to a program from which they received prior treatment, a new application must be made as a separate request is required for each admission.

Reimbursement Without Prior Approval

- Requests for reimbursement of payment for OOP or OOC treatment received without prior approval and proper documentation completed will not be considered.

Travel Arrangements

- All travel arrangements for OOP or OOC treatment shall be the responsibility of the referring clinician and applicant, and the applicant must pay for their own travel.
- However, applicants may be eligible for reimbursement of a portion of the travel costs through the Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP), administered by the Department of Labrador Affairs.
- MTAP offers flight prepayment options for economy airfare. For further information, please visit: [Medical Transportation Assistance Program \(MTAP\) - Labrador Affairs](#) or call, toll-free, 1-877-475-2412.
- Applicants in receipt of provincial benefits under the Income Support or Community Support Program may be eligible to receive upfront travel assistance through the Medical Transportation (MeTS) Program. For further information, please visit: [Medical Transportation Supports \(MeTS\) - Labrador Affairs](#).
- Applicants who are eligible to receive travel funding assistance under MeTS would not be eligible to receive funding under MTAP.
- If financial assistance is provided for travel to and from an OOP or OOC treatment facility, it will not include travel costs for temporary absence from the treatment program to return to this province (i.e. return home for special occasion).
- Coverage for a non-medical escort may be approved when there is a legal or medical requirement that results in the applicant being unable to travel alone, and people under the age of 18 years old shall automatically receive an escort.