



## NAVIGATING FIRST NATIONS & INUIT HEALTH BRANCH (FNIHB) NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS (NIHB) (formerly Medical Services) – Transportation Referral Unit (TRU)

### Background

is the federal department responsible for providing benefits to cover travel costs for eligible First Nation/Inuit individuals who must travel within Canada to attend medically required health services not available on reserve or in their community of residence. Such services include: appointments with physicians/medical practitioners, hospital care, tests, treatments, alcohol/drug abuse/detox, traditional healing, vision care, dental care, and mental health counseling. For the sake of simplicity, the acronym FNIHB-TRU will be used.

### Eligibility

Individuals from any of the groups below, who have a Treaty/N Number are eligible for benefits.

1. A First Nations person who is registered under the Indian Act (commonly referred to as a "Status Indian"); or
  2. An Inuk recognized by an Inuit land claim organization as outlined in Inuit client eligibility for the NIHB program; or
  3. A child less than 2 years old whose parent is an NIHB-eligible client.
- Treaty/N Number: the registration number used to access health benefits under FNIHB Non-Insured Health Benefits program. A treaty number for First Nations people contains 10 digits; an "N number" for Inuit is 8 digits and starts with an N.

### Benefits

1. Medical Relocation: FNIHB-TRU policy allows for 3 months of temporary support to relocate to city/town to receive medically required health services. If the process takes longer (which it usually does), then a health professional must advocate with FNIHB on a monthly basis to have the supports extended on an exception basis, until the permanent address is obtained. If the person chooses not to relocate, and instead travel repeatedly, transportation benefits will be supported up to 4 months.

### Procedures

1. Health care team member becomes aware that a patient requires assistance to access benefits from FNIHB-TRU (often times, the patient asks health care staff to contact FNIHB-TRU, a.k.a. Medical Services). FNIHB policy specifies that:
  - a) A registered medical professional must provide the rationale for the need for a medical or non-medical escort (as noted above), or if the patient is needing to stay in hospital/city for a longer period of time prior to returning home (i.e. Physician, Nurse, Occupational Therapist,



Physiotherapist, Speech Language Pathologist, Dietitian, etc., but does not include Social Worker).

- b) All other requests may be completed by any member of the health care team.
2. Obtain patient consent to share with FNIHB-TRU.
  3. Health care programs can assist Indigenous individuals by providing the following to FNIHB-TRU verbally or in writing:
    - Justification/rationale for eligible First Nation/Inuit individuals to receive benefits.
    - Confirmation of attendance at such health services.
    - For medical relocation requests only, these must be done in writing by way of a support letter from a medical professional outlining:
      - (i) Medically required health service(s) that is/are not available in home community.
      - (ii) Length of expected requirement is indefinite.
      - (iii) Recommended supports (formal and informal) that will be available in the receiving community.
- FNIHB-TRU Phone Lines (204-983-0911 and toll-free 1-877-983-0911), and Fax Lines (204-984-7834 or 204-984-7458) are operated:**
- By FNIHB-TRU Monday to Friday 08:00-17:00, and close during the 12:00-13:00 lunch hour.
  - By Keewatin Tribal Council Monday to Friday 17:00-08:00 and weekends. The calls are automatically routed to this number.
4. Ensure the patient is made aware of the status of the request.
  5. **For inpatients**, if there are barriers that cannot be resolved, or if the request has been denied and team member is of the opinion that an appeal is justified, consider contacting WRHA Indigenous Health for support:
    - Call 204-940-8880 or [indigenoushealth@wrha.mb.ca](mailto:indigenoushealth@wrha.mb.ca)
    - Referral form can be found in EPR/EMR and here: <https://wrha.mb.ca/files/indigenous-health-patient-referral-form.pdf>

**For clients in the community** here is a link to other navigation supports:

- Indigenous-Specific Health Navigation Supports <https://wrha.mb.ca/files/indigenous-health-navigation-supports.pdf>