



## December 2018

# Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program Update

*The latest news on NIHB policies and benefit coverage for First Nations and Inuit clients*

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## Pharmacy Benefit Information

### Coverage for Multiple Sclerosis Medications

On January 2, 2019, NIHB will list eleven medications for treatment of multiple sclerosis (MS) as limited use benefits with criteria. Previously, these medications were covered only on exception. The medications are listed below, and coverage criteria can be found in Appendix A of the [NIHB Drug Benefit List](#) on the Government of Canada website at [canada.ca/nihb](http://canada.ca/nihb).

Brand Name	Active Ingredient
Avonex	interferon beta-1a
Betaseron	interferon beta-1b

Rebif	interferon beta-1a
Extavia	interferon beta-1b
Plegridy	peginterferon beta-1a
Copaxone	glatiramer acetate
Glatect	glatiramer acetate
Tecfidera	dimethyl fumarate
Aubagio	teriflunomide
Gilenya	fingolimod
Lemtrada	alemtuzumab

## **New Listing for Diabetes Medication**

NIHB now covers Tresiba (insulin degludec) pre-filled pens as open benefits. This change adds another option for once-daily insulin therapy for adults with diabetes.

## **Benefits Recommended by Pharmacists**

NIHB has added epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPens) and some contraceptive products to the list of non-prescription (over-the-counter) benefits that can be prescribed or recommended by pharmacists. This means that you don't need a prescription from a doctor or nurse practitioner for coverage of these benefits.

You can find a complete list of eligible products and medications that can be prescribed or recommended by pharmacists in section 3.13 of the [NIHB Guide for Pharmacy Benefits](#) on the Government of Canada website at [canada.ca/nihb](http://canada.ca/nihb).

If your pharmacist doesn't know about this policy, please ask them to call the [NIHB Drug Exception Centre](#) at 1-800-580-0950 for information.

## **Client Safety Program**

NIHB has changed the name of the Prescription Monitoring Program (NIHB-PMP) to the Client Safety Program (NIHB-CSP). The new name better reflects the aim of the program, which is to support the safety of clients who are prescribed medications that have a risk of problematic use or dependence, such as opioids. Clients are enrolled in the NIHB-CSP based on their prescription drug claim history, or if they are being treated for opioid use disorder (for example, with methadone or Suboxone). Clients in the NIHB-CSP must have the same prescriber (or clinic) for opioid, benzodiazepine, stimulant and/or gabapentin prescriptions.

## **Reduction of Dose Limit for Benzodiazepines – Alberta**

To help ensure the safety of clients, the NIHB Program is further lowering the dose limit for coverage of benzodiazepines. This change is being implemented region by region, and will take effect in Alberta region on February 11, 2019.

Some clients may be exempt from these dose limits. Pharmacists should call the [NIHB Drug Exception Centre](#) when dose limits are reached.

## **Update on Coverage for Smoking Cessation Treatments**

Smoking cessation therapies are used to help people quit smoking. Some people need more than one patch at a time to control cravings, and may combine patches with other forms of nicotine replacement therapy. NIHB clients are now eligible in a 12-month period for coverage of:

- Up to 36 boxes of patches (7 patches per box)
- One 12-week course of treatment, like gums, lozenges, and inhalers, or spray

If you reach your limit on smoking cessation products but want to try quitting again, ask your pharmacist to call the [NIHB Drug Exception Centre](#) and you may be eligible for more. NIHB will cover these over-the-counter products when they are recommended or prescribed by a pharmacist, so you don't need a prescription from a doctor.

The Program also covers Zyban and Champix, which are prescription medications used to help people quit smoking. Please talk to your health care provider about the right products and therapies for you.

## **Dental Benefit Information**

### **New Coverage of Fluoride Treatment for Adults**

On December 5, 2018, the NIHB Program increased coverage of fluoride treatment to include clients 17 years of age and older with a frequency of one fluoride treatment in any 12-month period. Previously, the coverage was only for clients under 17 years of age. With this change, clients of all ages are eligible for coverage of fluoride treatment.

## **Change to Dental Sedation Policy**

NIHB revised its dental Sedation and General Anaesthesia Policy and removed the predetermination (PD) requirement for minimal sedation (nitrous oxide and oral sedation). These benefits are now listed as Schedule A (open benefits).

## **Medical Supplies and Equipment (MS&E) Benefits**

### **Registered Nurses as Prescribers for Certain MS&E Benefits**

NIHB will now accept prescriptions or written recommendations from registered nurses (RNs) for some MS&E benefits. This includes items in the categories of bathing and toileting aids, dressing aids, feeding aids, transfer aids, walking aids, incontinence, ostomy and catheter supplies, wound care supplies and breast prostheses. A complete list of these items is available in the [Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefit Lists](#) on the Government of Canada website at [canada.ca/nihb](http://canada.ca/nihb).

### **Additions to the MS&E Benefit Lists**

On December 17, 2018 NIHB added new items to the MS&E benefit lists. These items were previously covered only on exception, and are now listed benefits with criteria (prior approval required). New listings include:

- offloading walking and diabetic walking boots
- custom foot bed liners
- orthosis for club foot
- wheeled commodes (for purchase)
- oxygen conserving devices (rental)

Please consult the [Guide for Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefits](#) and [Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefit Lists](#) on the Government of Canada website at [canada.ca/nihb](http://canada.ca/nihb) for more information on Program policies (including prescriber and provider requirements), price and frequency guidelines for these benefits.

### **Change in Listing Status for Off-the-shelf Limb and Body Orthotics**

A range of off-the-shelf limb and body orthotics (e.g. splints, braces) are now open benefits. Prior approval for coverage is not needed if these items are provided within Program price and quantity guidelines. You can check the [Limb and Body Orthotics Benefits List](#) on the Government of Canada website at [canada.ca/nihb](http://canada.ca/nihb) for more information.

## NIHB Client Inquiries

<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:NIHB-SSNA@hc-sc.gc.ca">NIHB-SSNA@hc-sc.gc.ca</a>
<b>Alberta</b>	1-780-495-3302 (Main reception) 1-800-232-7301 Medical Transportation: 1-800-514-7106
<b>Atlantic</b>	1-800-565-3294
<b>British Columbia</b>	First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) 1-855-550-5454
<b>Manitoba</b>	1-800-665-8507 Medical Transportation: 1-877-983-0911
<b>Northwest Territories/Nunavut</b>	1-888-332-9222
<b>Ontario</b>	1-800-640-0642
<b>Quebec</b>	1-514-283-1575 1-877-483-1575 Mental Health Counselling: 1-877-583-2965
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	1-866-885-3933
<b>Yukon</b>	1-866-362-6717

## Pharmacy Benefits

<b>NIHB Drug Exception Centre</b>	1-800-580-0950 ext. #3
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## Dental and Orthodontic Services

<b>NIHB Dental Predetermination Centre</b>	1-855-618-6291 (Dental Services) 1-866-227-0943 (Orthodontic Services)
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