

COVID-19

Transportation, Accommodations, Escorts and Discharges for Indigenous Patient Medical Appointments and Hospital Visits in Manitoba

Information for Facilities and Providers

Indigenous Services Canada/Transportation Referral Unit (TRU) will continue to follow their regular approval process for transportation and temporary accommodation for Indigenous patients and essential medical escorts* who are travelling outside of their home community for a hospital visit or medical appointment.

As per the communique from the ISC/Transportation Referral Unit, March 30, 2020:

“In light of the recent memo distributed via the Province of Manitoba on behalf of all public health officials and health systems leaders advising the public of their current hospital visitor restrictions, please be aware that NIHB has made no change to their escort policy.

As always, if an escort has been deemed medically necessary by a health professional, we will continue to authorize a suitable individual to escort patients travelling for medical purposes and make all necessary adjustments in order to ensure that the patient is being provided the essential support they need.

If a patient is required to be admitted to the hospital, please be assured that NIHB will be providing assistance to the escort for the duration until the patient has been discharged and has been cleared to return home. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Transportation Referral Unit for further clarification at 1-877-983-0911.”

Northern Patient Transport Program (NPTP) will continue to follow their regular approval process and criteria for transportation and temporary accommodation for patients and essential medical escorts* who are travelling outside of their community for a hospital visit or medical appointment.

“Ride alongs” (non-essential escorts) will no longer be approved by NPTP on MedEvac trips.

Essential Medical Escorts

***Essential Medical Escorts** are escorts that have been deemed by a provider (primary care or specialist) as a required support for Indigenous patients (admitted, emergency/urgent care, ambulatory care).

Essential medical escorts will be allowed in Manitoba hospitals for the following types of Indigenous patients:

- Women who are laboring;
- Children under 18 years of age;
- Patients who require decision-making support;
- Patients who have severe cognitive delay or impairment based upon the provider's clinical judgment;
- Patients who have a significant or new onset mental illness has been determined to require support;
- Patients with communication disabilities or where there is a language barrier and language interpretation support is **not available at the facility**; AND
- Patients who require physical assistance during transport and while at the facility. For facilities that have staff to physically support patients while at the facility, the escort will not be allowed into the facility.

In many of the cases, the escort may be required for a long period of time and at any possible time, which goes beyond the capability of the health care provider or the Indigenous Health staff in various facilities.

When escorts arrive at the hospital with the patient, they will be screened for eligibility to enter the hospital. If they are deemed non-essential or do not meet the screening criteria, they will not be allowed entrance into the hospital.

When an essential medical escort does not meet the screening criteria and cannot enter the hospital, support for these patients will be provided by the individual hospital as per their internal guidelines.

Individual hospitals will also provide guidelines to escorts regarding specific escort limitations and activities within the hospital.

Non-essential escorts will not be allowed to enter hospitals/facilities.

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***Essential Medical Escorts – NPTP specific**

An escort is automatically authorized for patients under the age of 18 traveling for a medical appointment. In all other cases, the patient's physician needs to indicate that an escort is medically necessary and must provide information to support the medical reason(s) for the escort. Please note that emotional support, language barriers and patients of an elderly age are not considered medical reasons.

Support for Indigenous Patients in Winnipeg Facilities

(Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and Shared Health)

WRHA Indigenous Health Centralized Support should be contacted for language interpretation services for patients accessing health services in Winnipeg hospitals.

Support is available seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Call 204-940-8880 or 1-877-940-8880 for assistance.

Support for Patient and Escorts Post Discharge from Hospital

The Government of Nunavut and most First Nation communities in Manitoba are requiring their residents and essential medical escorts to self-isolate for 14 days upon discharge from any hospital in Manitoba prior to returning home to their community.

Discharged patients and their escorts can seek support for temporary accommodation for self-isolation and transportation as follows:

1. **Indigenous Services Canada/Transportation Referral Unit** will continue to follow their regular approval process for transportation and temporary accommodation for patient discharges from hospitals including discharge for Emergency Department visits

To receive request support: in Winnipeg, call 204-983-0911, outside of Winnipeg, 1-877-983-0911

For Emergency Departments in Winnipeg, the **WRHA Indigenous Health Centralized Support** can assist with obtaining approvals for transportation through the ISC/Transportation Referral Unit.

WRHA Indigenous Health Centralized Support is available seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Call 204-940-8880 or 1-877-940-8880 for assistance. Please ensure

that where necessary, a physician has signed off on all transportation and accommodation requests.

For Emergency Departments outside Winnipeg, patients and escorts should follow up directly with the ISC/Transportation Referral Unit

2. For Inuit patients being discharged from WRHA, Health Sciences Centre Winnipeg and Churchill hospitals, and returning to Nunavut, **Kivalliq Inuit Centre** is coordinating self-isolation accommodations. In Winnipeg call 204-989-1020. In Churchill, contact your Kivalliq staff on site: 204-675-8333 or 204-204-675-8313.

3. **Northern Patient Transport Program**

The Northern Patient Transport Program has not made any changes to their regular processes during the Covid-19 crisis. Patients and their essential escorts returning to their home community should make themselves aware if their community has imposed any restrictions. All community imposed restrictions and precautions will be adhered to.

Further information regarding isolation accommodations and guidelines will be provided as details are made available at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/indigenous-health/>