



March 2025

## 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

#### New pharmacy benefit listings

Refer to the [Drug Benefit List](https://nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en/040212) ([nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en/040212](https://nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en/040212)) to find all eligible products and criteria for coverage

The following medications and products are now covered as open benefits without prior approval:

- **Mezera 1G Tab (mesalazine)** for treatment of mild to moderate ulcerative colitis
- **Naloxone Prefilled Syringes 0.4mg/ml** for emergency use to reverse known or suspected opioid overdose
- **Teva-Naloxone (naloxone hydrochloride)** 4mg nasal spray for emergency use to reverse known or suspected opioid overdose
- **Slynd (drospirenone)**, an oral birth control pill

The following listings are covered as limited use benefits with prior approval:

- **Akeega (niraparib and abiraterone acetate)** for the treatment of prostate cancer
- **Amvuttra (vutrisiran)** for the treatment of polyneuropathy, a condition affecting the nerves
- **Eylea HD (afibercept)** for the treatment of some macular degeneration and diabetic eye disease
- **Koselugo (selumetinib)** for the treatment of patients aged 2 to 18 years of age with neurofibromatosis type 1, a genetic condition that causes tumours on nerve tissue
- **OmvoH (mirikizumab)** for the treatment of moderate to severe ulcerative colitis
- **Qulipta (atogepant)** for the treatment of chronic migraines



- **Steqeyma (ustekinumab)** for the treatment of plaque psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis, and Crohn's disease
- **Trikafta (elexacaftor-tezacaftor-ivacaftor)** for the treatment of cystic fibrosis in patients aged 2 years and older
- **Welireg (belzutifan)** for the treatment of adult patients diagnosed with von Hippel-Lindau (VHL) disease, a type of kidney cancer

## Change in coverage for some biologic medications

- The NIHB Program is changing coverage for certain biologic drugs. This change has already been introduced in Alberta and Atlantic regions, and will now apply to all provinces and territories
- Under the NIHB Biosimilar Policy, clients 19 years of age and older will be required to transition to the biosimilar version of their medication in order to maintain coverage
- Clients will have approximately one year to transition to the biosimilar version of their medication. As such, clients in Alberta and Atlantic should transition to the biosimilar medication by November 25, 2025, and clients in all other regions should transition by March 4, 2026
- Most provincial and territorial drug plans have already implemented similar policies for coverage of biosimilar medications. Aligning NIHB coverage with other public drug plans supports consistent client access to medications and care
- This change applies to three biologic medications, listed below along with the biosimilar versions:
  - Enbrel® (etanercept) – transition to Brenzys®, Erelzi®, or Rymti®
  - Remicade® (infliximab) – transition to Inflectra®, Renflexis™, or Avsola™
  - Rituxan® (rituximab) – transition to Ruxience®, Truxima®, or Riximyo®
- Make an appointment to speak with your health care provider if this change applies to you. Pharmacists and prescribers are well informed about biosimilars, and will help you transition to a biosimilar medication that's right for you
- Consult the Health Canada website for more information on [biosimilar biologic drugs](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/biosimilar-biologic-drugs.html) (available at [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca))

## Reminder of Shingrix coverage

- Shingrix is a vaccine to prevent shingles, which causes a painful rash and can be severe for some people. The risk of shingles is higher in seniors and in people with weaker immune systems
- NIHB covers Shingrix as an open benefit for clients 60 years and older
- Shingrix is listed on the Adjunct Cancer Formulary so coverage is available for clients undergoing cancer treatments
- NIHB also considers coverage for immunocompromised clients under 60 years of age on an exceptional basis (prior approval required)
- In most provinces and territories, the Shingrix vaccine can often be administered in pharmacies and pharmacists can bill NIHB for an injection fee
- If you are unable to have the vaccine administered at a pharmacy, ask your health care provider about other options





## Medical supplies and equipment benefit information

### New replacement guidelines for feeding supplies

- NIHB will now cover extension sets for enteral feeding with a recommended replacement guideline of 24 per year. Prior approval is not required within Program replacement guidelines
- For more information, please refer to section [9.5.3 Enteral feeding](#) (*available at [canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment](https://canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment)*) of the Self-care equipment and supplies benefits list

### Registered dietitians as recommenders of breastfeeding aids

- NIHB now accepts recommendations from Registered Dietitians for coverage of manual breast pumps, electric breast pumps, and nipple shields
- For more information on eligible items, please refer to section [9.5 Feeding](#) (*available at [canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment](https://canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment)*) of the Self-care equipment and supplies benefits list

### New coverage for single-use negative pressure wound therapy supplies

- NIHB now covers single-use negative pressure wound therapy devices for up to 8 weeks for clients with chronic wounds that are not responding to conventional treatments. Prior approval is required
- Traditional or hospital grade negative pressure wound therapy devices and their related supplies are not eligible for coverage
- For more information, please refer to section [13.4 Wound care](#) (*available at [canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment](https://canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment)*) of the Medical surgical equipment and supplies benefits lists



## NIHB client inquiries

*Email for general inquiries only. Do not send client reimbursement requests or appeals by email.*

<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:nihb-ssna@sac-isc.gc.ca">nihb-ssna@sac-isc.gc.ca</a>
<b>Alberta</b>	General inquiries: 1-800-232-7301 Email: <a href="mailto:abnihbqa-qrssna@sac-isc.gc.ca">abnihbqa-qrssna@sac-isc.gc.ca</a> Medical Transportation: 1-800-514-7106 Email: <a href="mailto:eru-ure@sac-isc.gc.ca">eru-ure@sac-isc.gc.ca</a>
<b>Atlantic</b>	1-800-565-3294 Email: <a href="mailto:nihb-atlnihb@sac-isc.gc.ca">nihb-atlnihb@sac-isc.gc.ca</a>
<b>British Columbia</b>	
NIHB clients (Inuit and non-resident First Nations)	1-800-232-7301
First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) (First Nations BC residents)	1-855-550-5454
<b>Manitoba</b>	General inquiries: 1-800-665-8507 Medical Transportation: 1-877-983-0911
<b>Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon</b>	1-888-332-9222
<b>Ontario</b>	1-800-640-0642
<b>Quebec</b>	1-514-283-1575 1-877-483-1575
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	1-866-885-3933 Email: <a href="mailto:sasknihb_inquiries@sac-isc.gc.ca">sasknihb_inquiries@sac-isc.gc.ca</a>
<b>NIHB Drug Exception Centre (Pharmacy benefits)</b>	1-800-580-0950
<b>NIHB Dental Predetermination Centre (Dental and orthodontic services)</b>	1-855-618-6291 (Dental Services) 1-866-227-0943 (Orthodontic Services)
<b>NIHB Call Centre at Express Scripts Canada</b>	1-888-441-4777

*For assistance with services provided by Express Scripts Canada, including NIHB client web accounts and submission of client reimbursement requests for pharmacy, dental, MS&E, vision care and mental health counselling benefits.*