

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 <u>Drug Benefit List</u> (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 (aflibercept) 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[™]
 - o 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 <u>biosimilar biologic drugs</u> (available at 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

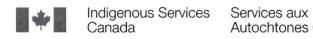
- NIHB will now cover extension sets for enteral feeding with a recommended replacement guideline of 24 per year. Prior approval is not required within Program replacement guidelines
- For more information, please refer to section <u>9.5.3 Enteral feeding</u> (available at canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment) 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 <u>9.5 Feeding</u> (available at 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 <u>13.4 Wound care</u> (available at 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.

Email	nihb-ssna@sac-isc.gc.ca
Alberta	General inquiries: 1-800-232-7301
	Email: abnihbqa-qrssna@sac-isc.gc.ca
	Medical Transportation: 1-800-514-7106
	Email: eru-ure@sac-isc.gc.ca
Atlantic	1-800-565-3294
	Email: nihb-atlfnihb@sac-isc.gc.ca
British Columbia	
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
Manitoba	General inquiries: 1-800-665-8507
	Medical Transportation: 1-877-983-0911
Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon	1-888-332-9222
Ontario	1-800-640-0642
Quebec	1-514-283-1575
	1-877-483-1575
Saskatchewan	1-866-885-3933
	Email: sasknihb inquiries@sac-isc.gc.ca
NIHB Drug Exception Centre	1-800-580-0950
(Pharmacy benefits)	
NIHB Dental Predetermination Centre	1-855-618-6291 (Dental Services)
(Dental and orthodontic services)	1-866-227-0943 (Orthodontic Services)
NIHB Call Centre at Express Scripts Canada	1-888-441-4777
	Canada, including NIHB client web accounts and submission of S&E, vision care and mental health counselling benefits.