



July 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*) to find all eligible products and criteria for coverage.

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

- **Apretude (cabotegravir)** a long-acting injectable pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to reduce the risk of HIV



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

- **Remsima (infliximab)** for the treatment of Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, and rheumatoid arthritis in adult patients
- **Sohonos (palovarotene)** to reduce the formation of heterotopic ossification (HO) in persons with fibrodysplasia ossificans progressive (FOP), a rare connective tissue disease
- **Vyvgart (efgartigimod alfa)** for the treatment of adult patients with generalized myasthenia gravis, an autoimmune disease affecting the nerves and muscles
- **Orladeyo (Berotralstat)** for the treatment of patients aged 12 years and older with hereditary angioedema (HAE), a condition causing severe swelling in the body
- **Imbruvica (ibrutinib)** for the treatment of some types of cancers
- **Ixifi (infliximab)** for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, psoriasis, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis
- **Truqap (capiwasertib)** for the treatment of breast cancer

Coverage status change for Ozempic

- Effective July 14, 2025, the listing status of Ozempic has changed to limited use. New coverage requests require prior approval
- This change will not affect clients who are already receiving coverage of Ozempic through NIHB
- Ozempic continues to be covered for the treatment of type 2 diabetes in adults, in combination with metformin or similar medications
- In most cases coverage of Ozempic will be approved automatically when the claim is submitted, if the client meets criteria
- If a coverage request for Ozempic is not approved automatically, pharmacy providers can submit a prior approval request to the NIHB Drug Exception Centre for consideration

Certain eczema medications now covered as open benefits

- NIHB now lists Protopic ointment and Elidel cream as open benefits. Prior approval is not required
- Previously, NIHB only covered these medications if clients did not respond to other eczema treatments, following Health Canada's earlier recommendations

Reminder: Coverage of Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV infection

- NIHB provides coverage for PrEP treatments, which help to prevent HIV in individuals who are at high risk of infection
- Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate-emtricitabine (Truvada and generics) and Apretude (cabotegravir) are covered as open benefits. Prior approval is not required
- Talk to your healthcare provider about whether PrEP is right for you. To learn more, please see the Public Health Agency of Canada publication on [biomedical prevention of HIV](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/hiv-factsheet-biomedical-prevention-prep-pep.html) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/hiv-factsheet-biomedical-prevention-prep-pep.html>)



Medical supplies and equipment benefit information

New coverage for prosthetic supplies

- NIHB will now provide coverage for the replacement skin finish for a prosthetic device
- More information can be found in section [7.0 Prosthetics](#) the NIHB Medical Supplies and Equipment Guide and Benefit Lists (*available at canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment*)

New eligible prescribers of low vision items and services

- NIHB now recognizes optometrists and ophthalmologists as eligible prescribers of assistive technology aids for low vision, low vision functional assessments and low vision training programs
- For more information, please refer to section [10.0 Low vision](#) of the NIHB Medical Supplies and Equipment Guide and Benefits Lists (*available at canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment*)

Vision care benefit information

Understanding frequency of coverage for general eye exams, corrective eyewear and repairs

- Frequency of coverage for general eye exams, as well as corrective eyewear and repairs, is based on age and follows a calendar year from January 1 to December 31

	General eye exam	Corrective eyewear	Repairs
Under 18 years old, ends day before 18th birthday	1 per calendar year	1 per calendar year	1 per calendar year
18-64 years old	1 every 2 calendar years	1 every 2 calendar years	1 every 2 calendar years
65 years and over	1 per calendar year	1 every 2 calendar years	1 every 2 calendar years

- To confirm your eligibility for vision care benefits, you can use the [eligibility function on your NIHB web account](#) (<https://sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1578079214611/1578079236012#s24-11-a2>) or contact the NIHB Call Centre at Express Scripts Canada at 1 888 511-4666
- Clients must first access all provincial, territorial, or private health insurance plans or programs for which they are eligible, before accessing coverage through NIHB
- For more details about coverage and frequency, see section [2.2 Eye examination frequency guidelines](#), section [3.2 Corrective eyewear frequency guidelines](#) and section [3.4.7 Exception: Repairs or replacement due to breakage, damage or loss](#) in the NIHB Vision Care Benefits Guide (*available at canada.ca/nihb-vision-care*)



Dental benefit information

Reminder: submitting dental appeal documents

- If you are denied NIHB coverage of a dental or orthodontic service, the decision can be appealed by the client, a parent or legal guardian, or a client representative. Clients can submit appeal requests online or by mail:
 - Online submission: clients will need to [create a secure web account](#) on the Express Scripts Canada NIHB provider and client website (*available at <https://nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en>*)
 - Mail submissions: label your envelope "APPEAL - CONFIDENTIAL" and mail it to the NIHB [Dental Predetermination Centre](#) (*canada.ca/nihb-contacts*), using the address for either dental or orthodontic services
- If you are submitting an appeal through your online web account, upload only documentation pertaining directly to your appeal. Any other information submitted through the appeal web page, such as client reimbursement claims, will not be processed.
- All appeals require an appeal letter that is signed and dated by the client, client representative or legal guardian, along with current supporting documentation of good diagnostic quality (radiographs, a treatment plan, or clinical findings, etc.). If the appeal letter is not signed and clearly marked as an appeal the request will be treated as a standard predetermination and may result in the appeal being returned unprocessed
- Services identified as exclusions under the NIHB Program will not be considered for appeal. For details on dental benefit exclusions, please see [Appendix F: Exclusions](#) of the NIHB Dental Benefits Guide (*available at canada.ca/nihb-dental*)
- If you have questions or would like support with the dental appeal process, you can contact the NIHB [Dental Predetermination Centre](#) (*canada.ca/nihb-contacts*) or an NIHB Navigator in your region

General benefit information

Express Scripts Canada video tutorials on client web accounts

- Express Scripts Canada processes NIHB claims for pharmacy, dental, vision care, medical supplies and equipment, and mental health counselling benefits
- NIHB clients can create a secure web account to view claims, submit client reimbursement requests, and submit appeals
- New instructional videos are available on the Express Scripts Canada website to help clients understand and use the features of their NIHB web account
- To view the videos, go to the [Express Scripts Canada client website](#) and click on the thumbnail titled 'Features for Clients' (*available at <https://nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en>*)



Reminder: provider billing

- Many health benefit providers are enrolled with NIHB to bill the program directly for eligible benefits provided to NIHB clients
- NIHB recommends that before you receive any item or service, you should speak to your provider's office to confirm if:
 - the provider is enrolled with NIHB and will bill the program directly
 - the item or service is fully covered by NIHB
 - the provider will not charge you any additional fees
- Clients will need to know their [NIHB client identification number](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1577997945536/1577997969295) (<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1577997945536/1577997969295>), and share this with the provider's office so their provider can bill the program for the items or services provided
- If your provider does not bill NIHB directly, you can contact the [NIHB program](https://canada.ca/nihb-contacts) (canada.ca/nihb-contacts) for assistance to find an alternate provider
- Clients who pay for eligible services up front can submit their claims to NIHB for reimbursement. Find complete instructions on the [Client reimbursement page](https://nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en/0205140506092019/12/1206) of the Express Scripts Canada NIHB website (<https://nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en/0205140506092019/12/1206>)



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-atlnihb@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 (Pharmacy benefits)	1-800-580-0950
NIHB Dental Predetermination Centre (Dental and orthodontic services)	1-855-618-6291 (Dental Services) 1-866-227-0943 (Orthodontic Services)
NIHB Call Centre at Express Scripts Canada	1-888-441-4777
<i>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.</i>	