



March 20, 2020

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) FOR PHARMACY PROVIDERS

COVID-19 Preparedness and Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Coverage

Q1: In the current context, will NIHB accommodate more flexibility in dispensing frequency?

A1: The NIHB Program recognizes that pharmacists are being provided with guidance on dispensing frequency from provincial/territorial authorities, professional associations and regulatory bodies.

Pharmacists are also asked to consider the unique living circumstances of some NIHB clients. Access to a pharmacy may be affected by weather (e.g. winter road access, delayed flights to remote communities) as well as the need to travel long distances, among other factors.

As such, NIHB will reimburse claims for a day-supply between 28 to 100 days, regardless of the day-supply originally prescribed.

To provide additional flexibility, the NIHB Program is also temporarily suspending the full applicability of the 28-day short term dispense policy. If a medication falls under the 28-day short term dispensing policy, providers may submit claims for between seven to 27 days using the Special Service Code (SSC) "2" to receive a full dispensing fee. NIHB's 7-day short term dispense policy will continue to be in effect.

If, in the pharmacist's professional judgement, an early refill is required, NIHB will reimburse for these claims. If the refill is submitted before 2/3 of their medications are used up, the provider may receive a rejection code (ME, MW, MY, and NE). One of the following CPhA Intervention Codes can be used as an override:



Intervention Code Description

UA	Consulted Prescriber and Filled Rx As Written
UB	Consulted Prescriber and Changed Dose
UC	Consulted Prescriber and Changed Instruction For Use
UD	Consulted Prescriber and Changed Drug
UE	Consulted Prescriber and Changed Quantity
UF	Client Gave Adequate Explanation. Rx Filled As Written
UG	Cautioned Client Rx Filled As Written
UI	Consulted Other Sources. Rx Filled As Written
UJ	Consulted Other Sources. Altered Rx And Filled
UN	Assessed Client, Therapy Is Appropriate
UL	Rx Not Filled – Pharmacist Decision
MR	Client Lost Medication. Rx Refilled

(Source: Pharmacy Claims Submission Kit, Section 7.4.1 CPhA Intervention Codes)

Similarly, when required as per the pharmacist’s professional judgement, NIHB will accept claims for greater than 30-days for medications which normally fall under NIHB’s 30-day dispense policy (i.e. opioids, benzodiazepines, gabapentin, pregabalin, stimulants and nabilone). A call to the Drug Exception Centre at 1-800-580-0950 may be required to override system limits.

Providers must complete and retain the appropriate documentation on the reason for the intervention (e.g. COVID-19 preparedness) directly on the prescription or on any hard or electronic version of the client file.

The NIHB Program will inform providers when they are expected to return to usual claim submission practices.

Q2: Does NIHB cover over-the-counter fever reducing/pain relief medications when recommended by a pharmacist?

A2: NIHB covers a wide range of fever reducing/pain relief medications for both adults and children. Under NIHB’s Non-prescription Treatment Recommendation Policy, the NIHB Program will reimburse claims for non-prescription medications (Schedule II, III and unscheduled drugs) for selected conditions when recommended by a pharmacist (please see section 3.13 of Pharmacy Guide for complete policy details).



Fever in children age 11 and under is currently an eligible condition. Effective March 11, 2020, NIHB has added fever or pain in youth and adults to the list as per the table below.

Claims for Non-prescription treatment(s) the NIHB Program will accept (prior approval not required)	
Condition	Eligible Schedule 2, 3 and unscheduled treatments
Fever or pain in youth age 12 and older and adults. Note: NIHB will reimburse for up to 100 tablets in advance of symptoms or illness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acetaminophen products listed in AHFS class 28:08.92 of the NIHB Drug Benefit List • Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories listed in AHFS class 28:08.04 of the NIHB Drug Benefit List
Fever in children age 11 and under – up to one standard pack size of a pediatric formulation may be dispensed at a time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ibuprofen oral liquid • Ibuprofen chewable tablets • Acetaminophen oral liquid • Acetaminophen chewable tablets

Q3: Will NIHB reimburse for controlled substances extended and/or dispensed under Health Canada’s new exemptions under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA) and its Regulations?

A3: NIHB reimburses for Schedule 1 drugs prescribed by a pharmacist, when prescribed in accordance with relevant provincial and territorial regulations, and which are benefits on NIHB's Drug Benefit List. This includes controlled drugs extended and/or dispensed under Health Canada’s new exemptions.