

Memo

To: ALL DENTISTS

From: Dental Director

Re: Referrals Out of Province for Insured Services under the Surgical Dental Program: In particular, Tongue-tie Revisions and OMF Surgeries.

Medical Transportation Assistance for Out of Province Referrals

Date: April 28, 2015

Insured services are listed in the Surgical Dental Payment Schedule. These insured services are based upon medical necessity as described in the *Canada Health Act* and can be provided inter-provincially as long as the service is delivered in a publicly funded facility (hospital). Insured services will be paid at host province rates. Eligibility for medical transportation assistance through the Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP) will only be considered if the service delivered out of province is not available within Newfoundland and Labrador.

Insured services performed out of country are payable at rates established by the Minister. These services must not be available in Canada and a Prior Approval is necessary. The in-province referring specialist would seek Prior Approval from MCP. Any remaining account balance(s) is the responsibility of the patient and/or private health insurance. Eligibility for assisting with out-of-country medical travel is based on a Prior Approval being granted by MCP for insured specialized services which are not available within the province and/ or country. If the patient's care cannot be managed within the country, he/she may be eligible for cost sharing of eligible medical travel expenses based on MTAP parameters.

In Newfoundland Labrador (NL) the office of an Oral Surgeon is deemed a hospital environment and therefore insured services can be provided in office if an OR setting is not required.

Currently, we have three opted in Oral Surgeons providing insured services in Newfoundland and Labrador. These are:

Dr. Amin Alibhai

Dr. Louis Bourget

Dr. Shannon Davis

Scope of practice and operating room access should be discussed with the Oral Surgeon prior to referral.

The choice of a Specialist is the prerogative of the referring provider in consultation with the patient being “referred”. However, two scenarios have been occurring with regularity recently:

- 1) Referrals made by general dentists to clinics in other jurisdictions for surgery.
 - In many cases the services have been performed in private clinics. Because NL is the only jurisdiction that insures delivery of eligible Surgical Dental services in an Oral Surgeon’s office, these services are not insured in the Oral Surgeon’s clinic in other provinces and are the financial responsibility of the patient. The Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP) does not provide out of province travel assistance to access services that are not insured or not referred by a specialist.
 - To summarize, for MTAP coverage: Assistance with out-of-province (within Canada) medical travel expenses is based on the medical referral of an in-province specialist to a publicly funded healthcare setting (hospital) for insured patient care which is not available within the Province.
 - An example of this type of referral for surgeries done in a clinical setting and referred by a general dentist has been some tongue tie revisions. As indicated above, the service is not insured because it is provided in a private clinic and the service is not eligible for MTAP unless there is a referral from a specialist AND the service is not available in Newfoundland and Labrador.

- 2) Referrals made to Oral Surgeons for out-of-province OMF surgery.
 - These surgeries require hospitalization and therefore are insured whether done in this province or in the publicly funded facility (hospital) within other jurisdictions.
 - The availability of Oral Surgeons in Newfoundland and Labrador has fluctuated in recent years and there exists some confusion about eligibility for MTAP coverage.
 - All patients who were referred to an Oral Surgeon who performs surgeries outside NL, and were seen by that surgeon prior to May 9, 2014, have the option of (a) continuing with that Oral Surgeon for out of province surgery; or (b) transferring to an in-province resident Oral Surgeon.

- Patients who continue with out-of-province surgery and were examined by the Oral Surgeon prior to May 9, 2014, may be eligible for medical travel assistance, if they are not funded by another source, as MTAP is a payer of last resort program. To avoid confusion, it is recommended that patients make application to the MTAP program prior to making arrangements for out of province travel.
- If patients opt to have surgery outside the Province (within Canada) and their first consultation was after the May 9, 2014 date, they will not be eligible for medical travel assistance.

Information on coverage for insured services can be obtained by contacting the Dental Director, Dr. Ed Williams by phone 709-758-1503, fax 709-729-7680, or email edwilliams@gov.nl.ca.

Information and an application for MTAP is available on the Government website:

Link: <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/travelassistance.html>