

# NIHB MS&E Processes In Alberta Region

New and Existing processes – February 2019



## Who is an eligible prescriber, authorizer, recommender?

- A physician;
- A nurse practitioner for certain medical supplies and equipment items, such as bandages, ostomy supplies, wheelchairs; or
- A health professional licensed to prescribe by a province or territory and recognized by the NIHB Program.

## What are the general NIHB MS & E categories?

- Audiology equipment (e.g. hearing aids);
- Medical equipment (e.g. wheelchairs and walkers);
- Medical supplies (e.g. bandages and dressings);
- Orthotics and custom-made footwear;
- Oxygen and respiratory supplies and equipment;
- Pressure garments; and.
- Prosthetics.

### A to Z benefits list

<https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/services/first-nations-inuit-health/non-insured-health-benefits/health-provider-information/medical-supplies-equipment-information/benefits-criteria/eligible-medical-supplies-equipment-benefits-health-providers-non-insured-health-benefits-first-nations-inuit-health.html>

## Processes in effect in Alberta

### Since June 2018

A recommendation from an Enterostomal trained nurse (ET), a Certified Enterostomal Therapy Nurse (CETN(C)), a Wound Ostomy and Continence nurse (WOCC(c)), or a First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care (HCC) wound care trained nurse authorizer (NA) is accepted for the coverage of wound care benefits by the NIHB Program.

### As of December 17, 2018

A prescription (where defined by scope of practice) or recommendation from a RN will be accepted for a defined list of MSE products. This includes items in the following categories: bathing and toileting aids, dressing aids, feeding aids, transfer aids, walking aids, incontinence, ostomy and catheter supplies, wound care supplies and breast prostheses.

## Nurse Authorizer Ordering Process (06/2018) - Alberta Region

- Put in effect due to the Alberta DDC closure, this was an alternative process for the ordering of HCC products for NIHB eligible clients
- HCC Nurses who meet the minimum nurse authorizer criteria as established at the national/regional level, are issued a nurse authorizer number can order MS&E directly with providers.
- An itemized prescription from the doctor specifying type and quantity of MS&E is no longer be required (but may still be used)
- Prior Approval requirements, such as for benefit eligibility or quantity, remain
- Orders are placed for individual NIHB clients (HCC Order Form) with HCC/(ET), (CETN(C)), (WOCC(c)) or NP review
- Any other NIHB eligible items that are not on the basket of goods eligible for ordering by HCC nurses go through the conventional NIHB process and are not available in this manner.
- Providers are NIHB-recognized MS&E suppliers such as pharmacies.

## Nurse Recommender Ordering Process (12/2018) - Alberta Region

- Recommendation from a RN will be accepted for a defined list of MSE. This includes items in the following categories: bathing and toileting aids, dressing aids, feeding aids, transfer aids, walking aids, incontinence, ostomy and catheter supplies, wound care supplies and breast prostheses.
- Since RNs may not be able to "prescribe" MSE items given their provincial/territorial scope of practice, the Program will instead accept a written recommendation for coverage. RNs are asked to ensure that the following information is provided when prescribing or recommending MSE items:
  - the client's full given name and surname, date of birth and client identification number if possible;
  - the item being prescribed/recommended, including details such as make/model, quantity, frequency, and size (the height & weight of the client if applicable);
  - the prescribing/recommending RN's printed name, professional designation, title and hand-written signature;
  - the prescribing/recommending RN's provincial college/association license number;
  - the prescribing/recommending RN's written signature and date (signed within the past 12 months); and
  - the prescribing/recommending RN's phone number and email.

## Benefit Details

- A list of items that RNs can prescribe/recommend can be found on the Indigenous Canada Website on the Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefit Lists

<https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/services/first-nations-inuit-health/non-insured-health-benefits/health-provider-information/medical-supplies-equipment-information/benefits-criteria/medical-supplies-equipment-general-benefits-criteria-health-provider-information-non-insured-health-benefits-first-nations-inuit-health-canada.html>

- Information concerning the MSE policies can be found on the Guide for Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefits

<https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/services/first-nations-inuit-health/reports-publications/non-insured-health-benefits/guide-medical-supplies-equipment-benefits-non-insured-health-benefits-2017.html>

## Q & A

### What processes do you use?

- Three processes exist in parallel for accessing NIHB MS&E benefits, and each may be used as appropriate for your clients needs and required supplies.
- The Nurse Authorizer Process (06/2018) is appropriate when a product requires NIHB prior approval and specific “prescriber /authorizer/ recommender” credentials and review.
- The Nurse Recommender Process (12/2018) is appropriate when a product meets NIHB’s newly expanded list of goods the Registered Nurses may now recommend
- Any other NIHB eligible items that are not on the basket of goods eligible for ordering by the above means, go through conventional NIHB process



## Q & A

### Why registered nurses are now allowed to “prescribe” or “recommend”?

- Benefit programs, including NIHB, establish policies and criteria for funding of benefits. As registered nurses (RN) are the primary providers of health care for many First Nations and Inuit clients, NIHB now allows RNs to prescribe or recommend coverage for selected medical equipment and supplies. These are items where a prescription is not legally required for a provider (e.g. pharmacist) to dispense the item. Therefore, NIHB can accept either a “prescription” or “recommendation” from a health care professional to confirm that the item is medically necessary for the client, and can be covered under the NIHB.
- Allowing RNs to authorize access to certain medical equipment and supplies under the NIHB Program will improve client care and access. This change of policy is also consistent with other benefit programs, such as Veterans Affairs Canada, that has this type of policy in place.
- This policy applies to all RNs in all practice settings, including on and off reserve, and nurses working in home care. Moving forward, this policy will be expanded to include other health professionals, including occupational therapists (OT), physiotherapists (PT), and respiratory therapists (RT), for particular appropriate benefits.

## Q & A

### Can all RNs prescribe/recommend MS&E under the NIHB Program?

- As a general policy, NIHB Program will now accept a prescription or recommendation from a RN to confirm a client's medical need for an MS&E item (as required by the Program in order to provide coverage).
- Whether an individual RN can prescribe an MS&E item depends on their scope of practice as defined by their licensing body (College or Association depending on the province or territory).
- Whether an RN can recommend an MS&E item is based on their own professional judgement, with consideration to their level of competence, stream of practice, practice setting, and their employer's policies.

## Q & A

### Are a prescription and recommendation meant to be interchangeable?

- No, these words are not meant to be interchangeable.
- In some jurisdictions, RNs have legislated prescribing rights under certain conditions and for certain items. For example, in Quebec, RNs can prescribe wound care products and barriers; and in some provinces, Nurse Specialized in Wound, Ostomy and Continence are allowed to prescribe ostomy, wound care and incontinence items. The NIHB Program recognizes these prescribing rights and now accepts prescriptions from RNs as confirmation of medical needs.
- The NIHB Program also recognizes that, within their scope of practice, RNs and other health care professionals have the competency, skill and knowledge to “recommend” certain medical equipment and supplies (e.g. items such as diapers from a registered nurse, or hearing aids from a hearing instrument practitioner). These are items where a prescription is not legally required for a provider to dispense the item, so NIHB can accept a recommendation instead.

