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First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

**AN IMPORTANT UPDATE FROM FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY
ABOUT A CHANGE IN DRUG BENEFITS FOR FNHA CLIENTS**

On October 1, 2017, the FNHA will join BC PharmaCare.

The aim is to bring drug benefits decisions closer to home in British Columbia, and increase ease of access to your benefits and services.

You might be asking, what will this mean for me? For most clients things will be the same at the pharmacy counter. For very few clients, there could be a change related to specific drugs. To find out if there is a change to your medication, please visit our website at www.fnha.ca. If you have additional questions about your prescriptions talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

As always bring your BC Services Card and Status Card to the pharmacy to access your drug benefits.

If you are travelling out-of-province, please plan ahead and fill your prescriptions here in British Columbia before you leave. PharmaCare is a BC program, and cannot pay for your prescriptions in other provinces. In most cases, you may be eligible to receive in advance a supply lasting up to 100 days. Speak directly with your pharmacist to find out more.

Your FNHA is working to ensure that there is no disruption to service. Further updates will be provide closer to the transition. Should you have any questions about your coverage, we want to hear from you. Call our toll free Health Benefits Support line at 1.855.550.5454 or email us at HealthBenefits@fnha.ca.

In wellness,

Richard Jock
Chief Operating Officer
First Nations Health Authority



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Health Care Providers Caring for Clients

<http://www.fnha.ca/benefits/pharmacare-transition/health-care-providers-caring-for-clients>

Important changes in health benefits on the way for FNHA clients

On October 1, 2017, all First Nations Health Authority clients will become beneficiaries of the BC PharmaCare program. Medications and therapies prescribed by healthcare providers will be filled based on the BC PharmaCare formulary as patients transfer from Health Canada's Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) drug coverage program. Please note the following:

ELIGIBILITY (as of October 1, 2017)

- All FNHA Clients who are eligible for MSP are also eligible to enroll for the new FNHA PharmaCare program. *automatically*
- Clients are eligible for all PharmaCare plans for which other BC residents are eligible.

FORMULARY CHANGE *pertains to DR + Pharmacy's*

- Although most patients will continue to be eligible for the medications they need, a small percentage will have to adjust drug therapies as they switch to the PharmaCare formulary.
- Consider prescribing therapies based on the PharmaCare formulary for FNHA Clients
- Because the NIHB and PharmaCare formularies have minor differences, prescribers may need to work with a small number of FNHA clients in determining an appropriate change in therapies.
- Specific drugs impacted by the transition to PharmaCare are listed as follows:
 - A patient who's been prescribed the medications found on this first list is advised to consult with you directly to discuss alternate therapies.
 - A patient who's been prescribed the medications on this second list needs only to speak with his/her pharmacist about changing such things as the brand, quantity or form of medication.
- All FNHA clients currently taking a drug that is not normally fully-covered under the Reference Drug Program will be given indefinite, full PharmaCare coverage of their current medication.

TRAVELLING / OUT-OF-PROVINCE CLAIMS

- FNHA clients will not have PharmaCare coverage for prescriptions filled outside of BC.
- Please work with your FNHA clients to ensure that they fill their prescriptions in BC prior to travelling out of province.
- Some pharmacies near the BC border are enrolled with PharmaCare.

SPECIAL AUTHORITIES

- FNHA clients who currently have Special Authorization for a drug through NIHB will be given transitional Special Authority coverage under PharmaCare. Going forward, any FNHA clients requiring a

new Special Authority will require you to follow PharmaCare processes in obtaining one, including for "No Substitution" prescriptions.

ADDITIONAL PHARMACARE CONSIDERATIONS *meds grandfathered in*

- **Reference Drug Program (RDP)** – All FNHA clients currently taking a drug that is not normally fully-covered under the RDP will be given indefinite, full PharmaCare coverage of their current medication. Starting October 1, 2017, new prescriptions for non-reference drugs will only be reimbursed by PharmaCare up to the reference comparator price, unless the client obtains a Special Authority. Please provide FNHA clients with information about the benefits of reference drugs and consider adapting their prescription as appropriate.
- **Select over-the-counter (OTC) drugs and medical supplies and equipment (MS&E)** – Most of these items are currently provided through NIHB, and will continue to be until further notice. Details will be provided when available.
- **Restricted Claimant Program (RCP)** – When necessary, FNHA clients may be placed in the RCP just like any other British Columbian. This will require prescribers to have a specific role in determining the appropriateness of a client's drug therapies and initiate contact with PharmaCare.
- **Palliative care** – Enroll FNHA clients, when appropriate, using the BC Palliative Care Benefits Registration form.
- **Appeals** - FNHA is developing an appeals process for clients. FNHA Clients may require physician support when appealing a denied PharmaCare claim.

MORE INFORMATION

- Pharmacists can find further information in their [Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- Prescribers (Physicians and Nurse Practitioners) can find further information in their [Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- Health care providers can share this newsletter about the transition with community members.
- Call 1.855.550.5454 or contact FNHA via email at

HealthBenefits@fnha.ca for further information.

Provided by:

Candy-Lea Chickite
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PharmaCare Frequently Asked Questions – Pharmacists

<http://www.fnha.ca/benefits/pharmacare-transition/health-care-providers-caring-for-clients/pharmacist-faqs>

Why is the FNHA joining PharmaCare?

FNHA has been purchasing services from Health Canada to process client claims for dental, drugs and medical supplies since transfer in 2013. FNHA has entered into an Agreement with PharmaCare and the Ministry of Health to plan the transition to PharmaCare and to develop a first-of-its-kind provincial First Nations drug benefit plan.

We want to utilize provincial systems where possible so that BC First Nations can access benefits in the same way as other British Columbians. By joining PharmaCare, we are leveraging provincial systems to streamline access to care for First Nations in BC.

What will I need to do differently as of October 1, 2017?

Just like today, all drug claims are submitted to PharmaNet first. As of October 1st claims for eligible items will be adjudicated according to PharmaCare policies and following PharmaCare rules. There will be a select few items, such as over-the-counter medications, that will continue to be rejected by PharmaCare and you should send these to NIHB for adjudication, the same as you do today.

FNHA and PharmaCare are working with pharmacy software vendors to make sure all local pharmacy software is updated by October 1, 2017, and that claims will automatically adjudicate with PharmaCare as the first payer for eligible clients. The change should be transparent to users of the system. These updates will allow FNHA client claims to be processed through PharmaNet and adjudicated as first payer against PharmaCare without a "host processing error." The local pharmacy software will then be able to submit claims that have been rejected and/or not fully paid by PharmaCare to an extended healthcare plan (if client has one) and then to Health Canada's NIHB plan.

Should a system adjudication issue occur, please contact your software vendor.

It is important to note that the FNHA and BC PharmaCare are working together to ensure the smoothest possible transition to the new PharmaCare plan. For instance:

- The vast majority of FNHA clients will be enrolled in the new PharmaCare plan automatically.
- FNHA clients who currently have Special Authorization for a drug through the NIHB will be given transitional Special Authority coverage under PharmaCare.
- All FNHA clients currently taking a drug that is not normally fully-covered under the Reference Drug Program will be given indefinite, full PharmaCare coverage of their current medication.

These are just a few examples of the strategies being put in place to reduce disruptions to patient coverage and to reduce administration for health care providers.

What about patients travelling out of province beyond October 1, 2017?

BC PharmaCare is a provincial program and it cannot cover prescriptions purchased outside the province. This is a significant change for some FNHA clients. We ask that all health care providers remind FNHA clients to plan ahead before they travel by obtaining the maximum days' supply of their medication before they leave the province.

There may be a few minor process exceptions as we fully transition from NIHB; information will be available about these in future communications.

Will I still be providing services to NIHB clients in BC?

Yes, there will still be a small number of NIHB clients in BC, such as First Nations not eligible for MSP or those insured under another benefit plan provided by a First Nations Organization pursuant to self-government agreements (e.g. Nisga'a). Not all First Nations individuals in BC will be eligible for the new FNHA PharmaCare plan.

Your Point of Sale System should adjudicate FNHA clients appropriately based on their Personal Health Number. First Nations in BC who are eligible for FNHA Health Benefits should also be eligible for the new FNHA PharmaCare plan. Questions related to enrollment with FNHA can be directed to FNHA Health Benefits at 1-855-550-5454.

Will all First Nations in BC be covered by PharmaCare?

No, not all First Nations individuals in BC will be eligible for the new FNHA PharmaCare plan. There will still be a small number of NIHB clients in BC, such as First Nations not eligible for MSP or those insured under another benefit plan provided by a First Nations Organization pursuant to self-government agreements (e.g. Nisga'a).

Please direct any questions related to FNHA Health Benefit enrollment can be directed to our FNHA client support representative at 1-855-550-5454.

Will there be a change to the NIHB Provider agreement?

No, the NIHB Provider agreement will remain in place to handle NIHB claims.

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PharmaCare Frequently Asked Questions – Prescriber *DETOL*

<http://www.fnha.ca/benefits/pharmacare-transition/health-care-providers-caring-for-clients/prescriber-faqs>

Why is the FNHA joining PharmaCare?

FNHA has been purchasing services from Health Canada to process client claims for dental, drugs and medical supplies since transfer in 2013. FNHA has entered into an Agreement with PharmaCare and the Ministry of Health to plan the transition to PharmaCare and to develop a first-of-its-kind provincial First Nations drug benefit plan.

We want to utilize provincial systems where possible so that BC First Nations can access benefits in the same way as other British Columbians. By joining PharmaCare, we are leveraging provincial systems to streamline access to care for First Nations in BC.

What is happening October 1, 2017?

PharmaCare and the FNHA have created a new PharmaCare plan "Plan W" for FNHA clients, to be implemented October 1, 2017. The plan offers 100% coverage of the eligible costs of drugs, dispensing fees, and pharmacy services. As of that date, FNHA clients will be covered by PharmaCare and subject to the same PharmaCare policies and processes as other BC residents. Plan W will become the first payer and primary pharmacy drug plan for eligible FNHA clients.

The small number of eligible medical supplies on the PharmaCare formulary will also be covered by PharmaCare (e.g. insulin pump and diabetes supplies). Over-the-Counter medications, and medical supplies and equipment (MS&E), which are currently provided through NIHB, will continue to be covered by NIHB until they can also be transitioned.

A Third Party Provider will be introduced in approximately late 2018 to replace NIHB and provide coverage for MS&E items and those few drugs which are not covered by PharmaCare.

What will I need to do differently as of October 1, 2017?

It is important to note that the FNHA and BC PharmaCare are working together to ensure the smoothest possible transition to the new PharmaCare plan. For instance:

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These are just a few examples of the strategies being put in place to reduce disruptions to patient coverage and to reduce administration for health care providers.

Please help your patients obtain coverage for drugs and access to provincial programs for FNHA clients as you would for any other BC resident. Consider prescribing based on the PharmaCare formulary, where appropriate.

What about patients travelling out of province beyond October 1, 2017?

BC PharmaCare is a provincial program and it cannot cover prescriptions purchased outside the province. This is a significant change for some FNHA clients. We ask that all health care providers remind FNHA clients to plan ahead before they travel by obtaining the maximum days' supply of their medication before they leave the province.

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Please direct any questions related to FNHA Health Benefit enrollment can be directed to our FNHA client support representative at 1-855-550-5454.

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