

Non-Insured Health Benefits Program Progress List 2015-2018

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) of Indigenous Services Canada are engaged in a comprehensive Joint Review of the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program. The NIHB Program prepared this document to highlight some key changes and improvements made during the Joint Review. AFN and FNIHB will continue working together to implement positive changes for NIHB clients.

2015	2016	2017	2018
<p>Pharmacy Benefit NIHB added 250 items (DINs) to the Drug Benefit List, including 19 different medications. New listings included medications for treatment of hypertension and hepatitis C.</p> <p>NIHB began accepting prescriptions from pharmacists for numerous medications (where allowed by provincial/territorial legislation), including some prenatal and women's health products, smoking cessation aids, lice treatments, and allergy medications.</p> <p>Dental Benefit NIHB removed the predetermination requirement for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of standard complete dentures (eligible every 8 years) • Complicated tooth extractions <p>Mental Health Counselling Benefit NIHB made the following changes in 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first 2 counselling sessions no longer require prior approval • Approval may be provided for up to 20 sessions • A treatment plan is no longer required for prior approval • Counselling can be provided through tele-health (when acceptable to client and provider). <p>Communications and Client Support NIHB Navigators have been hired in most regions. The AFN facilitates meetings of the NIHB Navigator Network to provide a forum for sharing information, and connect Navigators to key NIHB staff who are available to provide information and assist with client cases.</p> <p>NIHB started sharing information through the Healthy First Nations and Inuit Facebook page. Topics have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client eligibility and registration of children • Preventive dental and vision care benefits • Coverage of smoking cessation products • Coverage of allergy medications • Coverage of prenatal vitamins 	<p>Pharmacy Benefit NIHB added 199 items (DINs), including 32 different medications, for treatment of conditions such as epilepsy, type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.</p> <p>NIHB added coverage of Naloxone for treatment of opioid overdose, and simplified the process for coverage of Suboxone to treat opioid use disorder.</p> <p>Dental Benefit NIHB increased coverage for partial plastic dentures so they are eligible for replacement every 5 years (instead of every 8 years).</p> <p>NIHB established an advisory body of oral health professionals to provide independent expert advice about dental benefits and oral health for NIHB clients. The committee includes First Nations and Inuit dental professionals, and the AFN has an observer seat.</p> <p>To increase access to preventive oral health care, dental hygienists can now submit claims to NIHB as independent providers (within provincial/territorial scope of practice).</p> <p>NIHB removed the predetermination requirement for standard root canal treatments (except for wisdom teeth).</p> <p>Mental Health Counselling Benefit NIHB added guidelines for coverage of group counselling.</p> <p>Vision Care Benefit NIHB added coverage of progressive lenses for close and distance vision correction, as an alternative to standard bifocal lenses.</p> <p>Communications and Client Support NIHB created two new ways to contact the Program directly through the website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "Contact Us" web page for the NIHB Program now provides an email address for direct inquiries, and • The NIHB "Feedback Form" enables clients to inquire or send feedback directly to the NIHB Program. 	<p>Pharmacy Benefit NIHB added 180 new items (DINs), including 35 different medications, for treatment of conditions such as asthma, ADHD, type 2 diabetes and various types of cancer.</p> <p>NIHB added more products that can be prescribed or recommended by pharmacists, including acne medications, vitamin D and multivitamins for children, and diabetes supplies.</p> <p>Dental Benefit NIHB reviewed preventive dental benefits and made the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage for sealants and preventive resin coatings was extended to include bicuspid • Coverage for these services is provided for clients age 17 years and under (changed from 14 years) <p>Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefit The NIHB Program increased coverage for urinary catheters to 4 per day and removed the prior approval requirement.</p> <p>NIHB added new types of hearing aids as eligible benefits.</p> <p>Mental Health Counselling Benefit The following enhancements to mental health counselling benefits were made in 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional healer services will be introduced through projects developed and delivered by First Nations organizations. • Access to mental health counselling was expanded by removing the 'crisis' requirement to access benefits. <p>Medical Transportation Benefit NIHB expanded coverage so that all pregnant women who require transportation outside their community to deliver their babies are eligible for an escort.</p> <p>Communications and Client Support NIHB shared lists of enrolled dental, vision, MS&E and mental health providers with NIHB Navigators to help clients find providers who can bill the Program directly.</p>	<p>Pharmacy Benefit NIHB added 207 items (DINs), including 64 different medications for treatment of conditions such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and psoriasis.</p> <p>Naloxone nasal spray (Narcan) was listed as open benefit.</p> <p>NIHB expanded criteria for hepatitis C medications so clients at any stage of the disease are now covered.</p> <p>Dental Benefit On December 5, 2018, NIHB increased coverage of fluoride treatment to include clients of all ages. Clients 17 years and older are eligible for one fluoride treatment in 12 months.</p> <p>NIHB removed the predetermination (PD) requirement for mild sedation (nitrous oxide and oral sedation).</p> <p>NIHB increased provider fees for orthodontic services, and created a new tool that makes it easier for providers to submit cases for predetermination of coverage.</p> <p>Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefit New benefits include electronic blood pressure monitors, nipple shields for nursing mothers, completely-in-canal hearing aids and items to support gender identity.</p> <p>NIHB removed prior approval requirements for many bathing, toileting, lift, transfer and mobility aids, as well as numerous off-the-shelf limb and body orthotics (e.g. splints, braces), within Program price and quantity guidelines.</p> <p>On December 17, 2018, NIHB will list new limited use benefits (previously covered only on exception), including commodes, diabetic walking boots, custom foot bed liners, orthosis for club foot, and oxygen conserving devices.</p> <p>Communications and Client Support NIHB extended coverage for unregistered infants to give parents more time to apply for their child's status number. Infants under 12 months can access most benefits under their NIHB-eligible parent's number, and a temporary client number can be issued to process claims up to 18 months of age.</p> <p>The NIHB Drug Exception Centre (DEC) now takes calls from clients related to medication benefits, and received over 7000 client calls in 2018. Clients can contact the DEC at 1-800-580-0950.</p>