

IMPROVEMENTS TO FNHA HEALTH BENEFITS

Improvements to the Mental Health Counselling Benefit



Effective June 10, 2019, the Short-Term Crisis Intervention Mental Health Counselling program will be re-named the Mental Wellness and Counselling program to reflect improvements to coverage.

The program has been changed to improve access to services. These improvements include:

- Removing the requirement that clients be in a state of crisis in order to be eligible for services
- Providing counselling to all eligible clients regardless of residence on or off-reserve
- Extending the validity of prior approvals to 12 months (had been five previously)
- Increasing the number of counselling sessions covered from 15 to 20

A mental health provider registered with First Nations Health Benefits must provide counselling. A full list of registered providers is on the FNHA website at www.fnha.ca/benefits/mental-health.

Clients with any questions may call the Health Benefits support line at **1-855-550-5454**.

Short-Term Crisis Intervention Mental Health Counselling Program (Old)	Mental Wellness and Counselling Program (NEW – Effective June 10, 2019)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Counselling only available to clients living off-reserve· Clients must be in crisis to access counselling· Prior approvals only valid for 20 weeks· Provides coverage for 15 counselling sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Counselling available to all clients regardless of residence on or off-reserve✓ If clients need counselling they are eligible – there is no crisis requirement✓ Prior approvals valid for 12 months✓ Provides coverage for 20 counselling sessions

First Nations Health Benefits Expands Infant Eligibility to 18 Months



Effective June 7, 2019, First Nations Health Benefits (FNHB) is expanding infant eligibility for health benefits to 18 months to allow more time for parents to process their children's status number.

Under the new FNHB eligibility criteria, children aged 0–18 months will be able to access FNHB benefits using an eligible parent or guardian's status number. Children older than 18 months will be required to have their own status number to access FNHB benefits. Prior to this change, children without a status number could only access FNHB benefits until they were 12 months old.

To ensure there are no disruptions to a child's access to FNHB benefits, parents and guardians of infant children are encouraged to begin status registration immediately after the child's birth. For additional information on status registration, contact your Band Office or visit the [Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada's website](#).

For information on accessing health benefits through FNHB, please contact the FNHA Health Benefit support line toll-free at 1-855-550-5454 or visit the website at www.fnha.ca/benefits.

PharmaCare Adds New Treatment Options for Diabetes



Effective May 27, 2019, empagliflozin (Jardiance™) and empagliflozin with metformin (Synjardy®) are now available for coverage under PharmaCare as limited coverage benefits requiring Special Authority approval. The criteria for coverage is available on the [Special Authority](#) website. Jardiance and Synjardy are drugs used in adult patients with Type 2 diabetes and are in a class of medications called Sodium-Glucose Cotransporter 2 (SGLT-2) inhibitors.

Plan W clients who have been grandfathered under the Non-Insured Health Benefits program for SGLT-2 inhibitors (canagliflozin or dapagliflozin with or without metformin) from October 1, 2017 through May 27, 2019 will continue to receive coverage for these medications. Coverage will continue through Plan W.

Plan W Coverage for Insulin Glargine

The PharmaCare announcement on May 27, 2019 affects insulin glargine.

For FNHA clients already receiving the originator insulin glargine (Lantus[®]), Lantus coverage will continue. Clients are encouraged to switch to its biosimilar version Basaglar[™]. Since Aug. 2018, all new Plan W clients starting on insulin glargine have been covered for Basaglar. Basaglar remains a regular benefit for FNHA clients meaning no Special Authority is required.

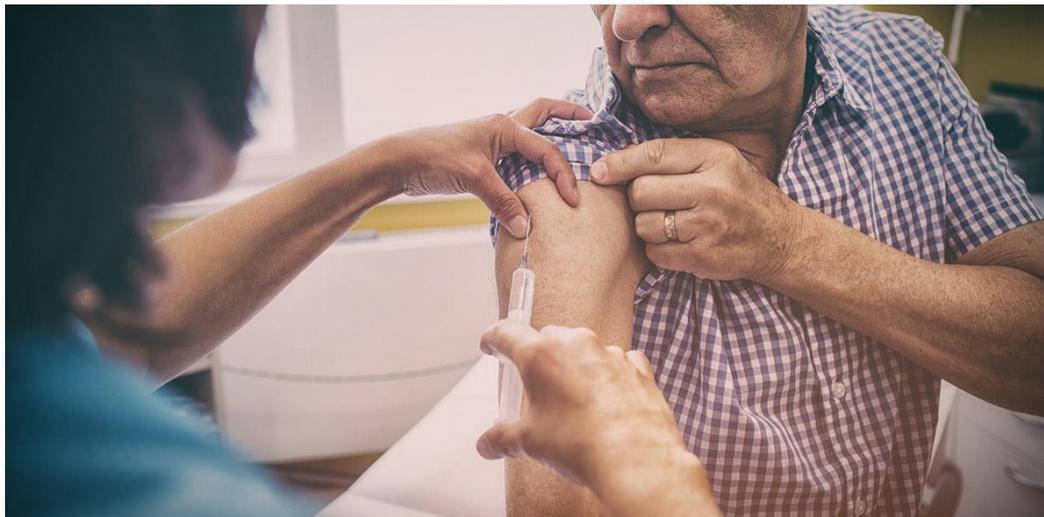
Accessing Coverage

Clients are encouraged to discuss what options are available to them with their healthcare teams.

FNHA is actively supporting the continuity of therapy for SGLT-2 inhibitors and insulin glargine. Clients with any questions or who would like more information are encouraged to contact First Nations Health Benefits at 1-855-550-5454.

The updated FNHA information sheet with the Summary of Diabetes Drugs, Insulins, and Supplies Coverage for FNHA Clients is available on our website:

First Nations Health Authority Now Covering the Shingrix[®] Shingles Vaccine



The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) is now providing reimbursement for the Shingrix[®] shingles vaccine, making it the first health jurisdiction in the country to do so.

Effective immediately, First Nations Health Benefits will accept client reimbursement requests (get the [FNHA reimbursement form here](#)) for vaccinations with the Shingrix[®] vaccine received on or after Oct. 1, 2018 by First Nations clients age 65 to 69.

Shingles – the common name for herpes zoster – is a painful blistering rash caused by a re-activation of the varicella-zoster virus. The pain of shingles can persist for weeks, months, or even longer after the rash has healed. Shingles can occur in anyone who has had chickenpox; however, it is more common – and more likely to cause complications and long-term effects– in older people.

"Shingles can be extremely painful and it is preventable. When it happens, treatment requires immediate medical care and antiviral drugs. Many First Nations clients live in remote areas where it's difficult to get this quick treatment," said Dr. Evan Adams, the FNHA's Chief Medical Officer. "We also know that there are cultural safety issues with some of our Elders that impede them from seeking the urgent response this condition requires."

Dr. Adams said that the FNHA has had ongoing conversations with Chiefs, Health Directors and other First Nations health leaders and the request for coverage of a shingles vaccine has been an important and recurring part of these discussions in order to protect the health of Elders.

"We are pleased we can respond to this feedback now that there is a vaccine that has a high rate of effectiveness," he said. "Shingrix® has a 90 per cent effectiveness rate."

A pharmacist, community health nurse or physician may administer the vaccine. It requires two doses to be fully effective. The 65 to 69-year-old age group was selected for the benefit coverage because the vaccine has a high impact on this age group. People in this age group are more likely to get shingles and to have higher rates of hospitalization from it. Requests for coverage of the vaccine for those outside the 65 to 69-year-old age group will be considered if submitted with medical documentation from a primary care provider to support the request.

Clients with any questions about this or any other aspect of the coverage are encouraged to contact First Nations Health Benefits at 1-855-550-5454.

Coming September 16, 2019: Improved Health Benefits Plan for Dental, Vision and Medical Supplies and Equipment



The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) is set to launch a new health benefits plan that will be more convenient to use and expand benefit coverage in key areas.

On September 16, the FNHA will transition dental, vision, and medical supplies and equipment (MS&E) benefits off the federal Non-Insured Health Benefits program. The FNHA's new partner, BC-based benefits provider Pacific Blue Cross, will administer these benefits as of this date.

FNHA clients and their health care providers will find the new system easier to use, with fewer requirements for pre-approvals and quicker turnarounds for adjudications and payments. In addition, the new plan will offer improved coverage for many health services, such as teeth cleaning, dentures, eye exams and eyeglasses.

[Learn more here!](#)

[Haisla Health Department](#)