

Medical Transportation Assistance

Late in 2022, NLPSPA wrote a detailed letter to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador seeking improvements to the Medical Transportation Assistance Program. On January 8, 2024, the Government released the following Press Release noting improvements to this program, which will surely be of assistance to our members who avail of this service for medical care. While NLPSPA still believes that the private vehicle mileage rate remains insufficient and the miles to be travelled for this rate coverage is still a barrier for a lot of people, the changes announced on January 8 are welcomed.

January 8, 2024

The Honourable Lisa Dempster, Minister of Labrador Affairs, today announced additional improvements for patients who avail of the Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP).

These improvements, which are effective for travel beginning on or after December 1, 2023, include:

1. A new 85 per cent flight assistance rate for Labrador-Grenfell Health Zone residents travelling in- and out-of-province with airfare costs greater than \$8,000 over a 12-month period.
2. Elimination of the \$400 deductible for residents of Island health zones who travel for medical appointments out-of-province.
3. An increase in assistance for residents of Island health zones who travel out-of-province by air. This change means that all residents of the province are entitled to the same airfare assistance rates when they must travel out-of-province to access specialized insured medical services. The extra financial help for patients and their escorts (if applicable) is offered upfront or after travel is complete and consists of:
 1. \$1,000 in total which can be applied towards the cost of first eligible flight(s).
 2. 75 per cent towards additional eligible airfare costs between \$1,000 and \$8,000; and
 3. 85 per cent towards costs greater than \$8,000 accumulated over a 12-month period.
4. An increase in the claimable per diem rate for purchased accommodations to \$150 per night in-province and \$175 per night out-of-province.
5. An increase in the private vehicle mileage rate from 20 cents to 25 cents per kilometre for patients who drive more than 4,000 kilometres during a 12-month period.

These improvements build on earlier enhancements announced in May and September, which included the expansion of assistance rates to all residents of the Labrador-Grenfell Health Zone and the establishment of a new in-province Flight Voucher Program in partnership with PAL Airlines. The newest 85 per cent airfare assistance rate will also be available for pre-approved flights booked through the new in-province Flight Voucher Program when airfare costs are greater than \$8,000 over a 12-month period.

The improvements in medical transportation assistance are financed through a \$1-million initiative announced by the Provincial Government in Budget 2023.

For more information about the Medical Transportation Assistance Program, call toll-free 1-877-475-2412 or see <https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/las/medical-transportation-assistance-program-mtap/>.