

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) NWT Health Care Card Renewal

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Q1: Why do I need a Health Care Card?

A: All Canadian residents are entitled to medically necessary physician and hospital services under the *Canada Health Act*. Each Province and Territory issues a health care card to their residents that identifies and verifies the card holder's residency, registration and eligibility. Each province or territory is responsible for paying the cost of medically necessary physician and hospital services for their residents. The health care card determines which province or territory pays for the service provided, no matter where in Canada you receive health care services.

Q2: Why do Health Care Cards expire?

A: Most jurisdictions in Canada have expiry dates. The requirement to renew a health care card provides a process for individuals to verify their province or territory of residency to ensure that each province or territory is only paying for health care services for their residents.

Q3: When does my NWT Health Care Card expire?

A: Your NWT health care card is active for 3 years, expiring on your birthday. This is similar to the expiry date for NWT Driver's licenses (i.e. on your birth date). The expiry date is on the bottom right hand corner of your health care card.

Q4: Why did the NWT Health Care Card's Look Change?

A: The GNWT released its updated Visual Identity Program in 2015. As part of the updates, the NWT health care card needs to comply with the new GNWT visual elements. The new look does not affect your health coverage. The old cards will be phased out by 2019. If your card does not expire until that time, it is still valid and you can continue using at the hospital, health centre and medical centre.

The back of the card does not have the magnetic stripe as this was not used on the old card and is therefore not required. Production of the cards without the magnetic stripe is also cheaper.

Q5: Where do I get the NWT Health Care Card renewal form?

A: You can download the form from www.hss.gov.nt.ca or call Health Services Administration at 1-800-661-0830 to receive a form by fax or mail. The form is also available in every community at the health center or hospital.

Q6: When can I renew my NWT Health Care Card?

A: Renewal can be completed four months in advance of your health care card's expiry date.

Q7: Can I renew my NWT Health Care Card over the phone?

A: No, because your signature is required. You must complete and sign the renewal form and return to Health Services Administration. The forms can be submitted by scanning and attaching to an email, by fax or mail.

Q8: When will I receive my new NWT Health Care Card?

A: If you apply in advance, you will receive your new health care card shortly before or after your birthday. Otherwise the processing time is approximately 4 weeks. If you will be travelling outside the NWT during this period, please contact the Health Services Administration office at 1-800-661-0830 Ext. 0 to request your renewal form to be expedited.

Q9: My NWT Health Care Card has already expired. What do I do?

A: If your card has been expired for more than one year you will be required to re-apply for an NWT Health Card. This will require that you provide proof of residency such as rent receipts, utility bill, phone bill or letter from a financial institution that you have a mortgage for local property.

Q10: I submitted my renewal form but I haven't received my new NWT Health Care Card yet. Can I still receive health care services in the NWT?

A: Yes. Your health care card number will remain the same. Give your health care card number to the receptionist and they can check their system. The system should have already been updated with your new information.

Q11: I submitted my renewal form but I haven't received my new NWT Health Care Card yet. I am in another province or territory. What do I do if I need health care services?

A: All other provinces or territories will request that you provide a valid NWT health care card before receiving health care services. If you do not have a valid NWT health care card with you, you will not be denied health care services, but the province or territory may require you to pay personally when you receive the services. You will then be required to request reimbursement from Health Services Administration.

To *avoid this situation* you can contact Health Services Administration prior to leaving the NWT and a document can be provided for you to take with you. This temporary documentation will provide confirmation that you are eligible for NWT health care coverage until you receive your new NWT Health Care Card in the mail.

Q12: My NWT Health Care Card has expired and I have not submitted a renewal form yet. What if I need health care services?

A: At no time will you be denied access to medically necessary health services, either in the case of an emergency or for a visit to a health center or clinic. If you do not have a valid health care card you will be required to pay for the service and seek reimbursement at a later date when you apply and are granted a new NWT Health Care Card. If you are receiving health services in the NWT, staff may assist clients in the renewal process.

Q13: Will I still receive GNWT Extended Health Benefits (EHB) if my NWT Health Care Card has expired?

A: No. Eligibility for Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Extended Health Benefits (EHB) requires the client to have valid NWT Health Care coverage. This includes Extended Health Benefits for seniors, Specified Disease Conditions or Metis Health Benefits. You must renew your NWT Health Care Card to continue to receive benefits under these programs, otherwise you will be required to personally pay (for medication, for example) and seek reimbursement at a later date when you apply and are granted a new NWT Health Care Card.

Q14: Can I still get my prescription filled if my NWT Health Care Card has expired?

A: The NWT Health Care Card does not provide coverage for prescriptions; only for medically necessary physician and hospital services. Services, medications and medical devices received outside of an Insured Health Facility (outside of a hospital or health center, for example) are Supplementary or Extended Health Benefits.

If you receive coverage through your Employer health plan, the Federal Non-Insured Health Benefits program (NIHB) or private health insurance, then you will still be able to have your prescription filled if your NWT Health Care Card is expired.

However, if you are eligible and registered for one of the GNWT EHB programs, you are required to have valid NWT Health Care coverage. This includes EHB for Seniors, Specified Disease Conditions or Metis Health Benefits (MHB). You must renew your NWT Health Care Card to continue to receive benefits under these programs, otherwise you will be required to personally pay and seek reimbursement at a later date when you apply and are granted a new NWT Health Care Card.

Q15: Will the government remind me that my NWT Health Care Card will expire?

A: It is your responsibility to check the expiry date on the bottom right hand corner of your health care card and complete and send the renewal application form up to four months in advance of the expiry date. However, to assist residents, a **Reminder Postcard** will be mailed to you at the address on file. This is similar to the notifications that are sent by the GNWT Department of Transportation providing reminders that your Driver's License is expiring.

Q16: Where can I find more information or assistance to renew my NWT Health Care Card?

A: Information is available on the **Department of Health and Social Services** website:

<http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/health/slides/your-health-care-card-expiring>

You can also contact **Health Service Administration** by phone, email, fax or mail at:

Health Services Administration

Department of Health and Social Services
Bag #9, Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0
Toll-free: 1-800-661-0830
Phone: (867) 777-7400
Fax: (867) 777-3197
E-mail: healthcarecard@gov.nt.ca

You can also contact the **Health and Social Services System Navigator** by calling toll free 1-855-846-9601 or by emailing HSS_Navigator@gov.nt.ca.

Also, if there is a **Government Services Officer (GSO)** in your community they can assist you with the NWT Health Care Card renewal process.

Q17: I submitted my renewal form two months ago however I have yet to receive my new health care card?

A: Health Care Renewal forms are processed based on expiry date. The Department is processing forms 2 – 4 weeks prior to your birthday.

Q18: Will I receive confirmation that the Department has received my renewal form?

A: If you submit your renewal form by email, you will receive a response within 1 working day that it has been received. Please note that the department cannot respond to emails sent directly from photocopiers. The Department is unable to respond to renewal forms submitted by mail or fax. . All documents received by mail or fax are recorded as they are received. Clients can contact the Health Services Administration office at 1-800-661-0830 Ext. 0 to confirm receipt.