Government of
Northwest Territories

MINISTERIAL DIRECTIVE

Medical Travel Benefit Administration
MD 2026-06

1. Directive

Pursuant to section 3.2 of the Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Act (HIHSSA), the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) is delegated to implement and administer the following medical travel benefits:

- The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) medical travel benefits in accordance with Schedule 5 of the GNWT Extended Health Benefits Policy (49.07) and associated process documents, on behalf of the Minister of Health and Social Services;
- The Government of Canada's Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program – Medical Transportation Benefit in accordance with the NIHB Medical Transportation Policy Framework, on behalf of and under the terms of the Contribution Agreement between the Department of Health and Social Services and Indigenous Services Canada (Contribution Agreement); and
- The GNWT Métis Health Benefits in accordance with the GNWT Métis Health Benefits Policy (49.01), on behalf of the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Further, the NTHSSA is to administer the above benefits in accordance with the operational requirements established in the Medical Travel Program Manual and is to report on medical travel benefit administration in a mutually agreed upon timeframe to allow the Department of Health and Social Services to report annually to the public.

This Directive rescinds Ministerial Directive 2026-01 – Medical Travel Benefit Administration, signed February 17, 2026.

2. Background

The Minister has the power to issue a directive to the Territorial board of management or a Board of Management in respect of any matter referred to in HIHSSA (section 3.2).

Medical travel benefits available under the GNWT Extended Health Benefits Policy (49.07), GNWT Métis Health Benefits Policy (49.01), and NIHB Medical Transportation Policy Framework differ and must be administered in accordance with the applicable program requirements:

Extended Health Benefits

The GNWT Extended Health Benefits Policy (49.07) establishes medical travel benefits for eligible NWT residents without employer or similar benefits who require travel to access medically necessary insured health services and eligible benefits under the Policy.

Clients eligible under the GNWT Extended Health Benefits Policy (49.07) who are also eligible for benefits from another medical travel program must exhaust all available benefits under that program before receiving benefits under the GNWT Extended Health Benefits Policy (49.07). This includes, but is not limited to:

- Government of Canada's Non-Insured Health Benefits
- NWT Métis Health Benefits (MHB) Policy (49.01)

In accordance with the medical travel processes established under the GNWT Extended Health Benefits Policy (49.07), the Department of Health and Social Services maintains responsibility for the administration and implementation of the following:

- Income Threshold and Cost Sharing;
- Income Assessment Process;
- Clinical Expertise; and
- Appeals Process.

The NTHSSA and the Department of Health and Social Services share responsibility for the administration and implementation of the following, as outlined within each document:

- Medical Travel Benefits;
- Nearest Centre Process; and
- Prior Approvals Process.

NIHB Program

The NIHB Medical Transportation Policy Framework applies when adjudicating requests for medical travel for insured and non-insured health services for eligible NIHB residents in the NWT, including processing eligible non-medical escort requests when the NIHB office is closed, and obtaining required approval documentation from the NIHB office to facilitate billing, which may be after travel has occurred.

Métis Health Benefits

With the exception of appeals and prior approvals, residents eligible for medical travel benefits under the Métis Health Benefits Policy (49.01) are entitled to the same benefits outlined in the NIHB Medical Transportation Policy Framework, including non-medical escort benefits. Appeals and prior approvals follow the processes established under the GNWT Extended Health Benefits Policy (49.07).

Medical Travel Program Manual
Medical travel benefits provided under the GNWT Extended Health Benefits Policy (49.07), the NIHB Medical Transportation Policy Framework and the Métis Health Benefits Program must be administered in accordance with the operational requirements established in the Medical Travel Program Manual, as updated from time to time. This includes but is not limited to the requirement of the NTHSSA to:

- Participate in an annual review of the Medical Travel Program Manual to ensure that it remains current;
- Develop, maintain, and implement Standard Operating Procedures set out in the Medical Travel Program Manual; and
- Administer benefits in accordance with the service standards established in the Medical Travel Program Manual.

3. Purpose

This Directive provides the framework for the NTHSSA to implement, administer, and report on medical travel benefits.

4. Definitions

No definitions.

5. Exceptions

No exceptions.

6. Amendment

The Minister may amend this Directive from time to time.

7. Effective Date

This Directive comes into effect on September 1, 2026.

8. Expiration Date

This Directive is in effect, as amended from time to time, until it is repealed by the Minister.

9. Review of Directive

This Directive will be reviewed by the Department annually.

<original signed by>
Lesa Semmler
Minister of Health and Social Services

Date