

QUICK GUIDE



# Accessing Medical Travel Supports in the NWT



Government of  
Northwest Territories

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# Understanding Supports for Medical Travel

## Getting care outside your community

If you need medical services that aren't available in your home community, there are programs that may help cover travel, accommodation, and related costs. This guide helps you understand who to contact and what steps to take based on your situation.

## What does “medical travel” mean?

Medical travel refers to the situation where you must leave your home community to receive necessary medical care. The supports available to help with travel costs depend on your eligibility and the type of coverage or benefit you have.



## What is a coverage provider?

A coverage provider is the organization responsible for helping pay your medical travel costs.

Examples of coverage providers include:

- **Government of the Northwest Territories**
- **Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC)**  
For work-related injuries.
- **Your Employer**
- **Your Private Health Insurance Company**



## Available supports and coverage options

The NTHSSA Medical Travel Office helps coordinate medical travel for:

- **Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB)**  
For First Nations and Inuit residents.
- **Métis Health Benefits (MHB)**  
For Indigenous Métis residents of the Northwest Territories.
- **Extended Health Benefits (EHB)**  
For seniors (60+), low-income residents, and those above the low-income threshold needing medical supplies and equipment.
- **NWT Medical Travel Policy**  
For residents who hold a valid NWT Health Care Card but have no benefits or private insurance.

# How to Access Support for Medical Travel



## Step 1: Identify which coverage applies to you

- **Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB)**  
Contact your local or regional NTHSSA Medical Travel Office.
- **Métis Health Benefits (MHB)**  
Contact your local or regional NTHSSA Medical Travel Office.
- **Extended Health Benefits (EHB)**  
Contact your local or regional NTHSSA Medical Travel Office.
- **Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC)**  
Contact WSCC at 1-800-661-0792.
- **Employer-Sponsored Benefits**  
Speak with your employer.
- **Not covered by the above but hold a valid NWT Health Care Card**  
Contact your local NTHSSA Medical Travel Office.
- **No Coverage by any of the above**  
Arrange private insurance.

## Step 2: Get a Medical Referral

To access support, you'll need a referral from your health care provider to the nearest location that offers the care you need.

If you're accessing support through the NTHSSA Medical Travel Office, your health care provider must submit a Medical Travel Benefit Application Form to the medical travel office for prior approval.

Other types of coverage may have different processes. Check with the contact listed in Step 1 to confirm what applies to you.



## Step 3: Arrange Your Travel

Once your travel is approved:

- If you qualify under EHB, MHB, NIHB or NWT Medical Travel Policy, the NTHSSA Medical Travel Office may book your travel for you.
- You may also choose to book your own travel and request reimbursement, but this must be pre-approved by the NTHSSA Medical Travel Office.
- If you have a different type of coverage (such as WSCC, employer-sponsored benefits, or private), contact the provider for that coverage to confirm how travel and reimbursement work.
- Always confirm travel is approved by your benefit provider prior to your appointment.



## Step 4: Prepare for Your Trip

### 1) Pack required documents:

- Photo ID (for flights)
- Health Care Card
- Appointment sheet

### 2) Follow travel arrangements provided by your benefit provider and keep all receipts.

#### **Important:**

If your travel is coordinated through the NTHSSA Medical Travel Office, each follow-up appointment requires separate prior approval. If an appointment is added on while on approved travel, please ensure you advise your local or regional medical travel office immediately to ensure your appointment is approved and proper arrangements can be made to extend your stay or change your travel dates.

If you're covered under a different type of benefit, approval processes may be different. Always check with your benefit provider to confirm what's required before you travel.

# Escort Eligibility, Costs, and Contacts

## What is an escort?

An escort is a person who may be approved to travel with you if you meet certain criteria. They must be capable and willing to support you for, at minimum, the first 21 days of your medical travel. This guide uses “escort” to mean a non-medical support person such as a family member or friend.

Escorts may be approved under GNWT administered supports, including the Extended Health Benefits, Métis Health Benefits, NWT Medical Travel Policy, and Non-Insured Health Benefits, if you:

- You are under 19 and need support.
- You are pregnant and travelling to give birth.
- You are breastfeeding an infant and require an escort.
- You have a mental or physical disability and cannot travel unassisted.

- Your health care provider has referred you for an initial diagnosis of a life-threatening illness.
- You need language interpretation during your trip.
- You are undergoing medical procedures that require general anesthetic or outpatient sedation and cannot travel unassisted afterward.
- Your treatment team has asked for someone to travel with you to learn how to care for you after discharge

**Note:**

GNWT administered escort requests must be approved by the NTHSSA Medical Travel Office in advance.

Each type of coverage has its own criteria. Always confirm with the coverage provider that applies to you.



## If an escort is approved, what may be covered?

- Approved intercommunity travel from the departure community to and from the closest location where care is available.
- Local transportation
- Accommodations and meals at designated boarding homes or reimbursements per established rates if clients choose to stay privately or are high income earners.

Costs and coverage limits vary by benefit plan. Confirm the details with your benefit provider before you travel.



## What if your request is denied?

If your request has been denied, and you wish to appeal the decision, you can request a review.

How to request a review depends on your coverage type:

- **If your medical travel was coordinated under NIHB, EHB, MHB, or the NWT Medical Travel Policy (valid NWT Health Care Card with no other coverage):**

Complete the Medical Travel Appeal Request Form and email it to: [medtravappeal@gov.nt.ca](mailto:medtravappeal@gov.nt.ca)

- **If you are covered through another type of benefit:**  
Contact your coverage provider directly to ask about their appeal process.

### Note:

Appeals for travel requests coordinated by the NTHSSA Medical Travel Office must be submitted within 60 days.

## Need Help?

If you're not sure which coverage type applies to you or what steps to take, contact:

- **Employer Benefits:** Contact your employer
- **Private Insurance Provider:** If applicable
- **WSCC (workplace injuries):** 1-800-661-0792
- **NTHSSA Medical Travel Office:**  
Scan the QR Code for details.



**Learn more:**  
Scan the QR code

