

REMINDER FROM FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY ABOUT CHANGES TO YOUR HEALTH CARE BENEFITS ON OCTOBER 1, 2017

As you may be aware, **the FNHA will join PharmaCare on October 1, 2017**. The move to PharmaCare addresses a number of longstanding policy and access barriers for First Nations in BC.

A new specialized First Nations PharmaCare plan - Plan W (Wellness), has been built into the PharmaCare system. **Please be assured that you will continue to receive the medications you need.** While most clients will not need to do anything related to this change, there are a few important exceptions.

- **If you are travelling out-of-province, remember to plan ahead** and fill your prescriptions here in British Columbia before you leave. In most cases, you will be eligible for up to a 100-day supply. PharmaCare is a provincial program, and cannot pay directly for your prescriptions in other provinces. A claims reimbursement process will be in place if you do need to fill prescriptions while away. Remember to keep your official pharmacy receipts; reimbursement is subject to PharmaCare plan rules and maximums.
- **If you have a health condition supported by a provincial agency** (BC Cancer Agency, BC Renal Agency, BC Transplant, or BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS), please speak to your doctor to ensure you are enrolled. These agencies provide prescription drugs for specific conditions. While you enroll, a six-month transition period is in place to ensure you continue to receive the medications you need.

A small percentage of clients may need to discuss their current prescriptions with their doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist. To find out if there is a change to your medication, visit our website at www.fnha.ca/pharmacare or call our toll-free Health Benefits Support line at 1.855.550.5454. As always, keep bringing your BC Services Card and Status Card to the pharmacy to access your drug benefits.

In closing, the purpose of this change is to increase ease of access to drug benefits and services, and to bring health care decisions closer to home in British Columbia. The move to PharmaCare is an important first step toward redesigning a drug benefits plan that will better meet the unique needs of First Nations in BC. Dental, vision and other non-insured benefits areas are also being reviewed for improvements.

Should you have any questions about your coverage, we want to hear from you. Call our toll-free Health Benefits Support line at 1.855.550.5454 or email us at HealthBenefits@fnha.ca.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS PHARMACARE?

PharmaCare is the provincial government's drug insurance program. It helps BC residents with the cost of eligible prescription drugs, certain medical supplies and pharmacy services. It provides assistance through several drug plans. By joining PharmaCare, First Nations will be part of the largest and most well established drug insurance program in BC. The FNHA PharmaCare plan (Plan W) will be a 100% paid plan.

WHAT IS PLAN W?

PharmaCare Plan W (Wellness) is the PharmaCare plan designed for First Nations in BC. Plan W will be a 100% paid plan and will be the first payer for FNHA clients at the pharmacy counter. Plan W does not require income testing and has no deductible. All the work is being done in the background to automatically enroll you with Plan W, so there are no new forms to fill out.

DO I NEED TO REGISTER FOR PHARMACARE?

Currently enrolled FNHA clients will be automatically registered with PharmaCare. FNHA administers Medical Services Plan (MSP) benefits on behalf of eligible First Nations clients. If you are receiving this letter, then you are registered under FNHA's MSP Group Plan and do not need to submit an MSP or PharmaCare application.

WHO MANDATED THE FNHA TO MAKE THE DECISION TO MOVE TO PHARMACARE? WERE FIRST NATIONS CONSULTED ON THIS CHANGE?

The transition to PharmaCare is a major milestone in the overall transition and transformation of First Nations health services in BC. The work has been guided by, and is in line with, the mandate given to the FNHA by First Nations in BC, as noted in the Consensus Paper and Resolution (2011). The Consensus Paper was adopted by resolution of the First Nations Health Council by Chiefs in Assembly at Gathering Wisdom for a Shared Journey in 2011.

HOW WILL FNHA ENSURE THAT CLIENTS ARE NOT GOING TO BE NEGATIVELY IMPACTED?

Client safety is our number one concern. Our analysis shows that, at a minimum, 90% of our client base will experience no change at all. Our goal is that this transition to PharmaCare be as seamless as possible for our clients. To protect client safety, we are providing thousands of clients with transitional Special Authority coverage under PharmaCare, for some existing therapies, to meet this goal.

WILL MY HEALTH-CARE PROVIDERS KNOW ABOUT THIS?

FNHA is informing health-care providers about this change. We encourage health-care providers to contact us directly at 1.855.550.5454, should they have any questions. If your health-care provider hasn't heard of this change, feel free to share this letter with them.