

First Step Policy

Revised January 22, 2020

I. Purpose Statement

The purpose of First Step is to advance access to health care by providing travel assistance to people living on the northern tip of Newfoundland's Northern Peninsula (NTNPN). To carry out its purpose of providing medical travel assistance, First Step will pay part of community members' medical travel expenses such as gasoline, meals, lodging and other expenses related to the medical travel. This purpose statement is the cornerstone of all policies regarding the distribution of First Step's assets.

II. Requesting First Step Assistance

- A. Everyone requesting assistance from First Step must complete the Application for Medical Travel Assistance Form (Assistance Form). Once the applicant completes the Assistance Form, they must submit it to any member of the First Step Board of Directors (BoD).¹
- B. Applicants must complete all parts of the Assistance Form. As part of their submission, each applicant must disclose any outside financial and travel assistance including, but not limited to, government assistance, fund raising efforts, special gifts et. al.
- C. First Step prefers people request assistance in advance of their medical trip. But, we realize this is not always possible. If you are unable to request in advance, we require that you submit your request to First Step no later than 30 days after your medical trip.
- D. Once the First Step receives the Assistance Form, it will transmit to all the BoD for review and a consensus decision on the amount of assistance First Step will provide.

¹ If the applicant is working with a social worker and the applicant directs them, the social worker may submit the Assistance Form to First Step

III. Reimbursement

- A. First Step will provide assistance by reimbursement following completion of a medical trip based on receipts except as provided below:
- a. For those traveling via private vehicle, First Step will provide the traveler with a pre-paid gasoline card. Upon return from the trip the traveler must return the card and provide the receipts.
 - b. The BoD may approve the provision of other pre-paid vendor cards in special circumstances.
 - c. The BoD may approve the direct payment to vendors (e.g. lodging)
- B. Reimbursement Rates
- a. Private Vehicle
 - i. To Corner Brook: \$150 maximum
 - ii. To St. John's: \$300 maximum
 - iii. Out of Province: 15 cents/kilometer²
 - b. Airplane Ticket³
 - i. St. John's
 1. Reimburse for one way ticket up to \$400 based on receipts
 2. Reimburse round trip ticket up to \$550 based on receipts
 - ii. Out of Province
 1. Reimburse 50% of ticket based on receipts
 - c. Lodging
 - i. Maximum per night \$100 based on receipt⁴
 - d. Meals
 - i. Maximum per day \$30⁵
- C. Maximum Reimbursement Per Trip is \$1,200⁶
- D. People receiving reimbursement of \$500 or less may request an E-payment.

² Same rate per kilometer as in Province travel

³ Airplane reimbursement rates based on the assumption MTAP pays for part of the flight costs

⁴ Same rate for in and out of Province

⁵ Same rate for in and out of Province

⁶ First Step will annually evaluate the Maximum Reimbursement Per Trip

IV. Reimbursement for an Escort

- A. First Step will reimburse part of the airplane ticket cost for a required escort.⁷
 - a. The maximum reimbursement rate based on receipts will be as follows:
 - i. St. John's
 - 1. \$950 total for both the patient and escort if both fly round trip
 - 2. \$750 if patient medevac'd in but flies home and escort flies both ways
 - 3. \$550 if both medevac'd and both fly home
 - ii. Out of Province will be decided by BoD based on circumstances
- B. First Step will not reimburse any additional cost for lodging for a required escort. However, if the patient is in the hospital, First Step will reimburse the patient for the required escort's lodging at the above reimbursement rates.
- C. The patient may use part of their \$30/day meal reimbursement to help pay for an escort's meals.

V. Travel Beyond the Closest Relevant Medical Facility

To qualify for reimbursement, First Step expects patients to travel to the closest relevant medical facility to their home. Any exceptions to this must be justified in writing by the patient's applicable specialist doctor.

VI. Other Travel Assistance and First Step

First Step will deduct the amount of financial help the patient receives from other sources (e.g. fundraising) from the help First Step would otherwise provide.

VII. Submission of Receipts/Relevant Documents

In order to receive reimbursement, after the patient completes their medical travel the patient must submit all relevant receipts and a written note from the medical provider indicating that the patient did receive the medical care.

⁷ To qualify for reimbursement an escort must be required in writing by a medical professional.

VIII. Exceptions

Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by all available BoD members.