



Out-of-Province & Out-of-Country Medical Coverage

There are times when people need medically necessary services outside of Saskatchewan. Under *The Canada Health Act*, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health covers most hospital and physician services received in Canada by a reciprocal billing arrangement, as long as these services are provided within the **publicly funded** health care system. In other words, before patients receive services in another province, they should ask the clinic or health facility if their health card will be honoured.

Out-of-Province Coverage

Prior approval is **not** required for the vast majority of hospital and physician services received in other provinces or territories. Patients will not be billed for most services they receive while travelling within Canada. **Exceptions are:**

- Alcohol and drug addiction, mental health, problem gambling services and home care – Prior approval is required.
- Bone mineral density testing - Prior approval is required.
- Certain services that the ministry covers in Saskatchewan which have been excluded from the reciprocal billing agreements. In such cases, the patient may be billed directly. If this happens, Saskatchewan will reimburse the patient at Saskatchewan rates for physician services and at agreed-upon rates for out-patient or hospital services.

The cost of travel, accommodation and meals is not covered.

Out-of-Country Elective Coverage

Coverage for out-of-country treatment is only considered in **exceptional** circumstances and under certain conditions -- and must have **prior approval** from the Ministry of Health. Travel, accommodation and meals will not be covered.

Prior Approval – The Steps

The referring specialist physician must request and receive prior approval from Medical Services Branch of the Ministry of Health prior to seeking treatment outside of Canada. The written request must:

- describe the circumstances of the case;
- clearly describe the service(s) being requested; and
- state -- to the best of the specialist's knowledge -- that the service(s) are not available anywhere in Canada.

Requests for out-of-country cancer treatment are assessed in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (SCA).

If prior approved, the ministry will pay the full cost of treatment for those items that would be covered in Saskatchewan.

Out-of-Country Emergency Coverage

If patients receive **emergency medical or hospital care** while outside Canada, they will be responsible for paying the difference between the amount charged and the amount the ministry reimburses. The costs outside Canada are often much higher than in Saskatchewan. For this reason, we strongly recommend residents carry extra medical insurance when travelling outside Canada.

Questions: Medical Services Branch
1-800-667-7523 (toll-free in Saskatchewan) or (306) 787-3475 (in Regina)
www.health.gov.sk.ca/out-of-province