



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness



## **Announcement**

**August 2, 2017**

### **Prescription Benefits for FNHA Clients Move to BC PharmaCare on October 1**

Effective October 1, 2017, First Nations in B.C. will join BC PharmaCare—the province’s largest drug insurance program. A new PharmaCare plan, Plan W, has been designed specifically for First Nations.

BC PharmaCare helps B.C. residents with the cost of eligible prescription drugs, and certain medical supplies and pharmacy services. It provides assistance through several drug plans.

Through this transfer, First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) clients will see their prescription benefits services move from Health Canada’s present system to PharmaCare. This transition is intended to reduce the steps needed for prescription coverage approval for First Nations clients who must sometimes navigate both federal and provincial services.

The FNHA has approximately 143,000 eligible clients. For the vast majority, their prescription drug coverage will not change, and coverage will switch automatically. Most FNHA clients will not notice any difference when picking up prescriptions at a pharmacy. Clients will need to continue to provide their Status Card and Personal Health Number to access drug benefits under PharmaCare.

In the transition to the BC PharmaCare drug formulary a small number of clients will see a change related to specific drugs. FNHA will ensure all patients continue to receive the medications they need. Any change in drug therapy will be made in partnership between clients and their health care providers based on what is best for their health. Clients can access more information on specific drugs that are impacted by the transition to Pharmacare at [www.fnha.ca/pharmacare](http://www.fnha.ca/pharmacare), and are urged to speak to their health-care provider about their prescriptions.

PharmaCare is a provincial program, and provides coverage for prescriptions within the province, but does not cover prescriptions purchased outside the province. Clients preparing to travel out-of-province should to plan ahead and fill their prescriptions before leaving B.C. A solution for reimbursement for out-of-province prescriptions is being developed.

Any client with questions, or experiencing a need for support with coverage as a result of the transition, is encouraged to call FNHA Health Benefits at 1-855-550-5454.

#### **First Nations Health Benefits Quick Facts**

Number of FNHA clients: approximately 143,000 (March 2017)

Number of pharmacy clients: approximately 99,000 (2016/17)

Number of claims: approximately 2.6 million (2016/17)

## **Backgrounder**

### **About the First Nations Health Authority**

The First Nations Health Authority is responsible for planning, management, service delivery and funding of health programs, in partnership with First Nations communities in B.C. The organization works to reform the way health care is delivered to B.C. First Nations through direct services, provincial collaboration and health system innovation. For more information on the FNHA, visit [www.fnha.ca](http://www.fnha.ca).

In October 2013, the FNHA assumed programs, services and responsibilities formerly handled by Health Canada. The Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program was included in the transfer and has since been delivered by FNHA as First Nations Health benefits.

At the time of this transfer, the FNHA entered into an interim “buy-back” arrangement with Health Canada that allowed the FNHA to buy back the administration of Pharmacy, Medical Supplies and Equipment and Dental claims processing and benefits review services from Health Canada over an extended period of time. The buy-back arrangement ensures continuity of services for BC First Nations and providers while the FNHA puts necessary systems and infrastructure in place for full transfer of services.

The move to PharmaCare is the first step to end the buy-back agreement. The transfer is part of a longer journey that will eventually see the administration of health benefits for Dental, Medical Supplies and Equipment also transferred to FNHA.

### **About Pharmacare**

For more information on PharmaCare, please visit

[www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare)

[www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/fnha](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/fnha)