



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness



## Welcome! Wytkp! Gilakas'la! Shhweenustham!

We hope you enjoyed the [February issue](#) of the Journeys bulletin.

Journeys is now in its third year! Thank you for your readership as we strive to provide helpful content and updates for your community's Medical Transportation (MT) program. The First Nations Health Benefits and Services (FNHBS) team appreciates your partnership in delivering and transforming the MT Benefit.

Watch our [YouTube video here](#) to learn more about the MT Transformation Journey and our progress so far.

### Exciting MT benefit updates ahead!

Exciting changes are on the horizon. Thanks to the ongoing community engagement driven by the MT Transformation Project and technical advice from the First Nations Health Directors Association, we've gained invaluable insights into our Clients' needs. In response, FNHBS will be introducing significant changes to MT Benefits on April 1, 2024, which include:

- Updated escort coverage to support low-barrier access to medically necessary services for Clients ages 65 and above;
- Updated escort coverage for Clients travelling to substance use treatment centres to recognize and support the unique needs of Clients seeking treatment;

- Increased private accommodation rates to ensure that Clients continue to have access to a range of accommodation options when receiving medical care;
- Adjustments to temporary and standard mileage rates to align with current gas prices; and
- Introduction of hospital parking benefits to alleviate the financial burden associated with parking fees during medical visits.

We will announce all updates regarding the changes taking place on April 1, 2024, on our [MT webpage](#), [Health Benefits News webpage](#) and our [Facebook page](#).

## ***Kucén*: transforming MT Benefit administration**



# Kucén

First Nations Health Authority  
Medical Transportation

Experience enhanced benefit administration with [Kucén](#) (pronounced koo-hen), which means “to wander/travel far away/abroad” in Secwepemctsin, the language of the Secwepemc people, from the Interior Salish language family. *Kucén* marks a significant advancement in our commitment to streamlining processes and creating a simple, easy-to-use MT administration system.

Some key features include:

- ✓ Check Client eligibility;
- ✓ Generate travel documents;
- ✓ Create and view trips generated by other organizations;
- ✓ Access to medical and travel provider information; and
- ✓ Automated reporting, eliminating the need for MT Log submissions.

*Kucén* is currently being used by MT Operations and six First Nation organizations. With its capacity to organize Client trips and automatically submit reports to FNHBS, *Kucén* has streamlined processing over 6,500 MT requests since April 2023; firmly establishing itself

as an essential tool for MT benefit administrators. Three additional communities are currently being onboarded with *Kucén*, and a large organization is undergoing initial system training with the MT Project Team.

Recent system updates have enabled benefit administrators to generate email summaries for their Clients, including detailed travel breakdowns. An upcoming update in Summer 2024 will simplify the Exceptions process, allowing all *Kucén* users to submit requests electronically.

If your Community is interested in adopting the new system, please participate in our [Kucén Survey](#) or contact us at [mtproject@fnha.ca](mailto:mtproject@fnha.ca).

## Tip of the Month: the Exceptions process



Specific travel requests must be submitted as an Exception for review by MT Operations. These include requests that are not defined as a benefit, as well as those needed for tracking purposes, such as stays over five days or medical birthing requests. For a list of requests that require an Exception, please refer to Section 4 of the [MT Benefits Schedule](#). If you are unsure whether or not a request should be submitted or need access to the Exceptions form, please get in touch with MT Operations at 1-855-550-5454.

All Exception submissions must include the following documentation:

- A completed Exception form;
- Copy of doctor's referral (if applicable);
- Confirmation of specialist appointment dates and times;
- Physician escort request form (if required); and
- Any additional supporting documentation that may justify the exceptional need.

Providing additional background information you have regarding the request is also helpful, as it often assists with the adjudication process.

Exceptions must be sent to MT Operations by fax (1-604-666-0292) or email at [transportation@fnha.ca](mailto:transportation@fnha.ca). Requests are reviewed individually, with a typical response time of one business day.

If an urgent decision is required, you may contact the Exceptions Team on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1-855-550-5454. Please note that documentation is still required in urgent cases.

## Explore our new Health Benefits factsheets!

**MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS**

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The Medical Transportation (MT) benefit is intended to supplement the cost of travel expenses to access medically necessary health services not available in your community of residence.

If you are registered with First Nations Health Benefits & Services (FNHBS), you are eligible for MT benefits.

**What my plan covers** ✓

You can access MT benefits for travel to access health services, including the following:

- > Medical services covered by the BC Medical Services Plan (MSP) or a public health agency (e.g., cancer-related travel);
- > Services eligible under FNHBS (e.g., dental, vision, etc.);
- > Publicly funded diagnostic tests and preventative screening programs;
- > Traditional healers, if approved as an Exception;
- > Treatment Centres for Substance Use (formerly NNADAP); or
- > Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT).

**What my plan does not cover** ✗

Some types of travel that are not covered by your MT benefits include, but are not limited to:

- > Travel back to your community of residence if you became ill during non-medical related travel; or
- > Travel where the only purpose is to pick up items that do not need to be fitted (e.g., prescriptions, glasses/contacts and various medical supplies and equipment items).

Note: Some travel requests require additional documentation. Your Patient Travel (PT) Clerk or FNHBS can support this process.

For additional information on current MT rates, escort eligibility, documentation or required travel forms, please scan the QR code to visit our website.

**MT benefits may provide funding towards the cost of travel, accommodation and meals for the following:**

- > A mileage rate that supplements the cost of fuel;
- > Non-commercial accommodation (i.e., Jean C. Barber Lodge or Easter Seals);
- > Commercial accommodation at the most economical medical rate;
- > Accommodation in private homes;
- > Meals at a daily rate, nightly rate or weekly rate.

**Note:** If you need someone to accompany you for medical travel, you may be eligible to travel with an Escort.

**How do I access coverage?**

Where you access the program depends on what Nation and/or community you are from and where you live.

**If you live in community,** please contact your community's Patient Travel (PT) Clerk to access your MT benefits.

**If you live outside your community,** or are unsure who to contact for your travel, please call us at **1-855-550-5454**.

- 1 Submit your travel request and your written confirmation of appointment at least five days before your trip to get prior approval.
- 2 You receive your travel arrangements from your PT Clerk or FNHBS.
- 3 Attend your appointment as scheduled and get a signed confirmation of attendance slip from your provider.
- 4 Submit your Confirmation of Attendance slip to your PT Clerk or to FNHBS.

If you have any questions about your MT benefits or how to access coverage, please call FNHBS at **1-855-550-5454**.

NOVEMBER

We have launched our new factsheets for each benefit area, offering Clients an overview of their Health Benefits plan. You can access the factsheets on the [FNHA website here](#).

**We encourage you to share these resources with your community members,** ensuring everyone knows about their plan, who to contact for questions, and how to access their benefits.

## **MT training for patient travel clerks**

The MT Operations team hosts regular training sessions throughout the year. If you or any member of your community would like to attend an MT training session, please contact [transportation@fnha.ca](mailto:transportation@fnha.ca) to sign up. One of our team members will be in touch about training dates and next steps.

## **Print-friendly version of Journeys**

In response to feedback from our Journeys survey, a print-friendly version of the monthly newsletter is now available. This will allow you to distribute Journeys among colleagues and other benefit administrators as needed.

All previous editions of our Journeys newsletter can be accessed on the [MT Project page](#), and each edition will now also feature a dedicated PDF link.

**Thank you**