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**Policy:** Caregiver Benefit Program Policy

**Originating Branch:**

**Original Approval Date:** July 27, 2009

**Effective Date:** July 2, 2021

**Updated Approval Date:** September 1, 2021

**Approved By:**

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Original Signed by Deputy Minister Seniors and Long-Term Care

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**Version** [# 5]

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. The Nova Scotia Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care Branch will provide access to a Caregiver Benefit Program for eligible Caregivers who assist Care Recipients residing in the community.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. **Activities of Daily Living Scale (ADL):** A scale that measures everyday tasks necessary for individuals to live independently, including hygiene, toileting, bathing, dressing, feeding and mobility.
- 2.2. **Caregiver:** For the purposes of the Caregiver Benefit Program, a Caregiver is an individual who is providing unpaid assistance with ADLs and IADLs to a family member or friend.
- 2.3. **Caregiver Benefit:** Monthly funding provided to an eligible Caregiver who is providing assistance to a Care Recipient.
- 2.4. **Care Recipient:** An individual who is receiving assistance from an eligible Caregiver and who is determined, through assessment by a Continuing Care Coordinator, to meet the qualification requirements of the Caregiver Benefit Program.
- 2.5. **Cognitive Performance Scale (CPS):** A scale that measures an individual's cognitive impairment.
- 2.6. **Continuing Care Coordinator:** An employee of the Nova Scotia Health Authority who is responsible for the determination of eligibility for the Caregiver Benefit Program.
- 2.7. **Continuing Care Single Entry Access:** The process for residents of Nova Scotia to access programs and services available through the formal continuing care system.
- 2.8. **Home Care Income Category:** A determination of the Care Recipient's income status which is based on net income and family size of the individual and is calculated using the Home Support Fee Determination Process in the Home Care Policy Manual.

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- 2.9. **Instrumental Activities of Daily Living Involvement Scale (IADL):** A scale that measures an individual's self-performance in seven areas commonly associated with independent living including: meal preparation, ordinary housework, medication management, financial management, shopping, phone use and transportation.
- 2.10. **Method for Assigning Priority Level (MAPLe):** A decision support tool that identifies individuals with priority service needs. It combines factors associated with caregiver distress, cognitive functioning, difficult behaviours, and dependence on others to perform activities of daily living.
- 2.11. **MDS-HC:** A standardized, comprehensive assessment of an adult's functional, medical, psychosocial, and cognitive status.

### 3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The Caregiver Benefit is provided to eligible Caregivers to acknowledge their contributions in assisting a family member or friend and to assist the Caregiver in sustaining the support they provide.

### 4. APPLICATION

- 4.1. This policy applies to individuals who meet the eligibility criteria of the Caregiver Benefit Program.

### 5. POLICY DIRECTIVES

- 5.1. Eligibility Criteria:

- 5.1.1. Caregiver Eligibility:

To be eligible to receive the Caregiver Benefit, a Caregiver must:

- Be a resident of Nova Scotia, with a valid Nova Scotia health card number, or be in the process of establishing permanent residence in Nova Scotia and have applied for coverage under Nova Scotia's Health Insurance Plan;
- Be 19 years of age or older;
- Provide 20 or more hours of assistance with ADLs and/or IADLs per week to a Care Recipient;
- Have a caregiving relationship with the Care Recipient that is ongoing, regular and is expected to extend beyond 90 days;
- Not be paid to provide assistance to the Care Recipient;
- Meet the eligibility criteria for the Caregiver Benefit Program, as determined by a Continuing Care Coordinator assessment.
- Sign an agreement with Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care and Nova Scotia Health Authority defining any terms and conditions for receiving the Caregiver Benefit.

- 5.1.2. Care Recipient Eligibility:

To be eligible to enroll in the Caregiver Benefit Program, a Care Recipient must:

- Be a resident of Nova Scotia, with a valid Nova Scotia health card number, or be in the process of establishing permanent residence in Nova Scotia and have applied for coverage under Nova Scotia's Health Insurance Plan;
- Be 19 years of age or older;

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- Have a caregiving relationship with an eligible Caregiver that is ongoing, regular and is expected to extend beyond 90 days;
  - Have a net annual income that places the individual in Home Care Income Category A, as determined by the Home Care Support Fee Determination Process in the Home Care Policy Manual;
  - Have an MDS-HC assessment completed by a Continuing Care Coordinator and demonstrate:
    - a very high level of functional impairment, as indicated by a score of 5 on the MAPLe **or**;
    - a high level of functional impairment, as indicated by a score of 4 on the MAPLe **combined with at least one of the following**:
      - a CPS score of 2 or higher **or**;
      - an ADL score of 3 or higher **or**;
      - an IADL Involvement score of 12 or more.
- 5.1.3. Continued program eligibility will be reviewed by a Continuing Care Coordinator annually at a minimum.
- 5.1.4. On reassessment, if the Care Recipient's MAPLe score improves as a result of being part of the Caregiver Benefit Program, they may remain in the Program if all other eligibility criteria are met.
- 5.2. The Caregiver Benefit shall be in the amount of \$400.00 per month and paid at the beginning of the month for which the funds are provided.
- 5.3. Caregiver Benefit Program Limitations:
- 5.3.1. A Caregiver may only receive one payment through the Caregiver Benefit Program;
- 5.3.2. No more than one Caregiver may receive a Caregiver Benefit for the assistance provided to a single Care Recipient.
- 5.3.3. A Caregiver cannot combine the assistance provided to more than one individual to meet the Caregiver Benefit Program eligibility requirements.
- 5.3.4. More than one Caregiver cannot combine the hours of assistance provided to a single Care Recipient to meet the Caregiver Benefit Program eligibility requirements.
- 5.4. Interruption in Care Provision:
- 5.4.1. In the event of a temporary interruption in a caregiving arrangement of less than 30 days, the Caregiver Benefit Program may be continued for up to one month (30 days). Examples of such interruptions include, but are not limited to the Care Recipient is admitted to hospital or a Respite Bed; or the Caregiver is not available due to illness, vacation, etc.
- 5.4.2. The Caregiver must notify the Continuing Care Coordinator if the caregiving arrangement is interrupted for a period exceeding, or anticipated to exceed, 30 consecutive days.

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## 5.5. Application and Approval Process:

- 5.5.1. Enrollment in the Caregiver Benefit Program is approved in accordance with this policy and the process established by the Nova Scotia Health Authority.
- 5.5.2. Referrals to the Caregiver Benefit Program must be made through the Continuing Care Single Entry Access process.
- 5.5.3. Determination of an applicant's eligibility for the Caregiver Benefit Program is the responsibility of the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

## 5.6. Discontinuation of Caregiver Benefit:

- 5.6.1. Caregiver Benefit Program eligibility will be discontinued if:
  - The Caregiver is no longer capable or available to provide assistance;
  - The Caregiver no longer meets the eligibility criteria;
  - The Care Recipient no longer meets the eligibility criteria;
  - There is an interruption in the caregiving arrangement of more than one month (30 days);
  - The Care Recipient is admitted to a regular bed in a long term care facility;
  - The Care Recipient is deceased.

## 5.7. Access to Other Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care Services:

- 5.7.1. Care Recipients may also be eligible to access other services, in accordance with current legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines.
- 5.7.2. The Caregiver Benefit will not be used:
  - To determine the maximum allowable home care service available to the Caregiver or Care Recipient,
  - As part of net income for the calculation of fees for home care services,
  - As part of net income for the determination of long term care accommodation charges, or
  - As part of net income for determining qualification for the Caregiver Benefit Program.

## 5.8. Waitlist:

- 5.8.1. Access to the Caregiver Benefit Program will be based on the availability of resources.
- 5.8.2. If warranted, a provincial waitlist for the Caregiver Benefit Program will be established. The Nova Scotia Health Authority will be responsible for managing this waitlist. Caregivers who have been approved for the Caregiver Benefit Program by the Nova Scotia Health Authority will be placed on this waitlist in accordance with the following:
  - Caregivers of Care Recipients with a MAPLe score of 5 will have first priority for the Program, followed by:
  - Caregivers of Care Recipients with a MAPLe score of 4 combined with either:
    - a CPS score of 2 or higher then;

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- an ADL score of 3 or higher than;
- an IADL score of 12 or more.
- Within each criterion outlined above, Caregivers of Care Recipients will be organized by chronological date using the service plan objective date for the Program.

### 6. ACCOUNTABILITY

- 6.1. Accountability is delegated to the Deputy Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care to administer this policy.
- 6.2. The Senior Executive Director of Continuing Care, or designate, has responsibility for on-going monitoring and enforcement of this policy.

### 7. MONITORING / OUTCOME MEASUREMENT

- 7.1. The Director of Home and Community, Continuing Care will monitor the implementation, performance, and effectiveness of this policy.

### 8. VERSION CONTROL

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Version:	Version #5/ July 2, 2021, Replaces all previous versions
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### 9. INQUIRIES

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