



**Policy:** Personal Alert Assistance Program Policy

**Originating Branch:**

**Original Approval Date:** January 1, 2011      **Effective Date:** October 30, 2019

**Approved By:**

**Original signed by the Deputy Minister**

Dr. Tom Marrie, Deputy Minister, Department of Health and Wellness

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**Version #: 2**

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1. The Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, Continuing Care Branch, will provide financial assistance to low income seniors, and to individuals living with acquired brain injury who meet eligibility criteria to purchase Personal Alert Assistance.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. **Acquired Brain Injury:** temporary or permanent brain damage or dysfunction that has been caused by trauma from an external force, or a medical problem or disease process which causes damage to the brain. ABI does not include congenital disorders or developmental disability (i.e. cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy) or processes which progressively damage the brain (i.e. multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's Disease".

2.2. **Continuing Care Coordinator:** An employee of the Nova Scotia Health Authority who is responsible for the determination of eligibility for the Personal Alert Assistance Program.

2.3. **Home Care Income Category:** A determination of the Recipient's income status that 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*.

2.4. **Personal Alert Assistance:** Refers to a 24-hour personal support and emergency response system that when activated can directly connect individuals to a Response Centre which can contact the appropriate help. Personal Alert Systems include two-way communicator devices (e.g., wrist band/pendant and unit connected to phone line).

2.5. **Recipient:** A person who is receiving financial assistance to support the purchase of Personal Alert Assistance and who is determined, through assessment by a Continuing Care Coordinator, to meet the eligibility requirements of the Personal Alert Assistance Program.

### 3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. This program is intended to support eligible Nova Scotians in remaining independent within their own homes and to facilitate access to immediate medical attention in an emergency.

### 4. APPLICATION

- 4.1. This policy applies to:

Persons who meet the eligibility criteria of the Personal Alert Assistance Program.

This policy does **not** apply to:

Persons eligible for similar programs or services through other federal, provincial or municipal programs (i.e. Department of Community Services, Veterans Independence Program or Indigenous Services Canada).

### 5. POLICY DIRECTIVES

#### 5.1. Eligibility

- 5.1.1. Determination of an individual's eligibility, including reassessment for the Personal Alert Assistance Program is the responsibility of the Continuing Care Coordinators.

- 5.1.2. An individual is eligible to receive financial assistance towards the purchase of Personal Alert Assistance when he/she meets the following criteria:

- is a resident of Nova Scotia, with a valid Nova Scotia health card number or is in the process of establishing permanent residence in Nova Scotia and has applied for coverage under Nova Scotia's Health Insurance Plan;
- is 65 years of age or older at time of application; or if between age 19 and 64 be diagnosed with an acquired brain injury.
- lives alone;
- has a prognosis that he/she will be long term users of home care services, e.g., has a requirement for service that will extend beyond 90 days;
- has a RAI-HC assessment completed by a Continuing Care Coordinator which indicates the individual fell two or more times in the 90 days prior to assessment and uses a mobility device, including cane, walker, and/or wheelchair;
- has a net income which places the individual in Home Care Client Income Category A, as determined through the current Home Care Fee Determination Process (see Department of Health and Wellness *Home Care Policy Manual*); and,
- is willing to sign an agreement with the Department of Health and Wellness defining any terms and conditions for receiving the financial assistance for Personal Alert Assistance.

- 5.1.3. Continued program eligibility will be confirmed on at least an annual basis.

- 5.1.4. If on reassessment of the Recipient, the Continuing Care Coordinator determines that the Recipient no longer meets the falls criteria, the Recipient may still be considered eligible for the Personal Alert Assistance Program as long as they still meet all other criteria and are currently receiving publicly funded home nursing and/or home support services or self-managed care services.
- 5.1.5. Recipients may also be eligible to access other Continuing Care services. Access to Continuing Care services is provided in accordance with current legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines.

5.2. **Personal Alert Assistance Payment**

- 5.2.1. The maximum amount of financial assistance a Recipient may receive through the Personal Alert Assistance Program is \$480.00 per calendar year. This funding includes one-time set-up fees and recurring monthly charges.
- 5.2.2. To receive reimbursement, Recipients must submit invoices to the Nova Scotia Health Authority, as indicated on the Invoice Form.
- 5.2.3. Recipients are responsible to submit their invoices on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis.
- 5.2.4. All invoices must be submitted by January 31 for the preceding calendar year.
- 5.2.5. The Department of Health and Wellness will issue payment of the invoice within 30 calendar days of the Nova Scotia Health Authority receiving the invoice from the Recipient.
- 5.2.6. Payment will be issued via Direct Deposit to the Recipient's bank account.

5.3. **Interruption of a Recipient's Living Arrangement**

- 5.3.1. In the event of an extended, but temporary interruption in the clients living arrangement, eligibility for funding through the Personal Alert Assistance Program may be continued for 90 days. Examples of such interruptions include, but are not limited to, admission to hospital, vacation, etc.
- 5.3.2. The Recipient is responsible to notify their Continuing Care Coordinator in the event they experience an interruption in their living arrangement, which will affect their usage of Personal Alert Assistance.

5.4. **Discontinuation of Financial Assistance**

- 5.4.1. Recipients will have funding discontinued if it is determined that:
  - the Recipient no longer meets the eligibility criteria;
  - the Recipient is admitted to a regular bed in a long term care facility;
  - the Recipient is admitted to hospital and the anticipated discharge date is greater than 90 days;

- the Recipient chooses to discontinue the Personal Alert Assistance; or
- the Recipient is deceased.

**5.5. Program Limitations**

5.5.1. Access to financial assistance through the Personal Alert Assistance Program will be based on the availability of resources.

5.5.2. If warranted, a provincial waitlist for financial assistance through the Personal Alert Assistance Program will be established. The Department of Health and Wellness will be responsible for managing this waitlist. Clients who meet the eligibility criteria and have received authorization from their Care Coordinator for this program will be organized on the waitlist by chronological date using the service plan objective date for the Personal Alert Assistance Program.

**6. ACCOUNTABILITY**

- 6.1. For the purpose of the administration of this policy, accountability is delegated to the Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness.
- 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 Senior Executive Director of Continuing Care will monitor the implementation, performance and effectiveness of this policy.

**8. REFERENCES**

8.1. Home Care Policy Manual

**9. VERSION CONTROL**

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Version Control:	Version # 2 October 30, 2019 Administrative amendments to include Nova Scotians under age 65 living with an ABI; Updated Aboriginal Affairs Northern Development Canada with Indigenous Services Canada; DHA with NSHA and Executive Director to Senior Executive Director. Replaces all previous versions.
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**10. INQUIRIES**

Senior Executive Director  
Continuing Care  
Nova Scotia Department of  
Health & Wellness  
Tel: (902) 424-5818 or toll free 1-800-387-6665