

# NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS CONTINUING CARE BRANCH

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**Subject: Personal Alert Assistance Program Policy**

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Original Approved Date: January 1, 2011

Revised Date: February 1, 2013

Approved by: original signed by Kevin McNamara, Deputy Minister  
Kevin McNamara, Deputy Minister, Department of Health and Wellness

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## 1 POLICY STATEMENT

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

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.

## 2 GLOSSARY

**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).

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

**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 Care Fee Determination Process.

**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 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

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;
- 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.
- is not eligible for similar programs or services through other federal, provincial (i.e. Department of Community Services) or municipal programs (e.g. Veteran's Independence Program).
- First Nation individuals living on Reserve may be eligible for this program if they are not receiving Income Assistance through Aboriginal Affairs Northern Development Canada.

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.

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

Determination of an individual's eligibility to the Personal Alert Assistance Program is the responsibility of Continuing Care Coordinators.

### **4 AGREEMENT**

A condition of receiving funding through the Personal Alert Assistance Program is that the Recipient signs an agreement with Continuing Care which outlines the terms and conditions that he/she is required to meet to receive the funding.

## **5 PROGRAM LIMITATIONS**

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

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 PERSONAL ALERT ASSISTANCE AMOUNT**

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 onetime set-up fees and recurring monthly charges.

## **7 PAYMENT OF BENEFIT**

- To receive reimbursement, Recipients must submit invoices to their District Health Authority, as indicated on the Invoice Form.
- Recipients are responsible to submit their invoices on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis.
- All invoices must be submitted by January 31 for the preceding calendar year
- The Department of Health and Wellness will issue payment of the invoice within 30 calendar days of the District Health Authority receiving the invoice from the Recipient.
- Payment will be issued via Direct Deposit to the Recipient's bank account.

## **8 INTERRUPTION OF CLIENTS LIVING ARRANGEMENT**

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.

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.

## **9 DISCONTINUATION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

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.

## **10 ACCESS TO OTHER CONTINUING CARE SERVICES**

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.

## **11 ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Executive Director, Continuing Care Branch, or designate, is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

## **12 MONITORING**

The implementation, performance and effectiveness of this Policy will be monitored by the Executive Director, Continuing Care Branch, or designate.

## **13 ENQUIRIES**

Executive Director, Continuing Care Branch  
Department of Health and Wellness  
PO Box 488  
Halifax, NS B3J 2R8  
Phone: (902) 424-7233

## **14 APPENDICES**

Not applicable