



Policy: 2100 Ground Ambulance Service Fees

Originating Branch:

Original Approval Date:

Effective Date: January 1, 2015

Approved By:

Dr. Peter Vaughan, Deputy Minister Health and Wellness

Version #:2100.00

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the process with respect to invoicing for the provision of ground ambulance services.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. Ambulance transportation: means the transportation of a person by ground ambulance.
- 2.2. Approved facility: Means a healthcare institution listed in Schedule "A" of the *Ambulance Fee* regulations.
- 2.3. Declared emergencies: As defined in the Emergency Management Act, means a present or imminent event in respect of which the Minister of Emergency Management or a municipality, as the case may be, believes prompt co-ordination of action or regulation of persons or property must be undertaken to protect property or the health, safety or welfare of people in the Province.
- 2.4. EHS: A branch of the Government of Nova Scotia, within the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW), charged with the administration of the Emergency Health Services Act.
- 2.5. EHS Operations Management (EHSOM): Refers to the current provider of Ground Ambulance services and EHS LifeFlight Management services.
- 2.6. EHS System: Any component of the Ground Ambulance and Air Medical systems where direct or indirect patient care is provided, including all facilities, vehicles, personnel, etc.
- 2.7. Good Samaritan: For the purpose of this policy in respect of a person who is ill, injured or unconscious as a result of an accident or other emergency, a volunteer renders services or assistance at any place (including volunteer members of recognized emergency service agencies, requiring transport as a result of action undertake as a member of that agency).

- 2.8. Inter-facility transportation: means ambulance transportation, between or among approved facilities, and from an approved facility to a person's residence, if the person is receiving acute home care. Transports from approved facility parking lots are also considered inter-facility, with the exception of those deemed to be third party insured.
- 2.9. Long-term-care facility: means a nursing home, home for the aged or residential care facility licensed by the Minister of Health and Wellness under the Homes for Special Care Act.
- 2.10. Medically essential transportation: means ambulance transportation that begins or ends at an approved facility, and for greater certainty, does not include inter-facility transportation or transport of a mobility challenged individual for transportation purposes.
- 2.11. Mobility challenged individual: means a person who, because of a mental or physical limitation that has been verified by a physician, requires ambulance transportation for transportation purposes. EHS can request confirmation of the mental or physical limitation every 6 months.
- 2.12. New residents: Residents new to Nova Scotia who require ambulance service within the waiting period for their NS MSI coverage to commence (first day of the third month following the date residency is established).
- 2.13. Nova Scotia health card number: means the health card number issued by the Province of Nova Scotia that entitles residents to insured health care services under the Health Services and Insurance Act.
- 2.14. Service Fee Appeal Committee: Reviews individual invoices using the Ambulance Fee Regulations to assess whether or not the service fee was appropriate.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. To ensure a consistent invoicing process and clear interpretation of the *Ambulance Fee Regulations*.

4. APPLICATION

- 4.1. This policy applies to all ground ambulance service fees issued under the *Health Services and Insurance Act* (HSIA) and the regulations respecting Ambulance Service Fees, known as *Ambulance Fee Regulations* on behalf of EHS by EHSOM.
- 4.2. This policy does not apply to air medical services fees issued on behalf of EHS by EHSOM.

5. POLICY DIRECTIVES

- 5.1. Service fees for ground ambulance transports are authorized by the Health Services and Insurance Act (HSIA) and the regulations respecting Ambulance Service Fees, known as Ambulance Fee Regulations.

- 5.2. Where not stipulated by the Ambulance Fee Regulations, service fees will be set by EHS.
- 5.3. Ambulance service fees will be issued in accordance with the Ambulance Fee Regulations.
- 5.4. There will be no exemptions to the regulations other than as outlined in this policy.
- 5.5. EHS will directly invoice the referring Nova Scotia District Health Authority for all ambulance service fees associated with the transport of their patients to hospitals other than the approved facilities listed in Ambulance Fee Regulations, for medically essential transportation.
- 5.6. The full cost of ambulance transport is the responsibility of the patient for ambulance transportation to healthcare institution other than the approved facilities listed in Ambulance Fee Regulations, where it is deemed the transport is not medically essential.
- 5.7. All Mobility Challenged transports will be billed as private pay transport until the patient or their authorized representative submits a note verifying by a physician that they require ambulance transportation for transportation purposes.
- 5.8. The Mobility Challenged rate will also be used as the rate for a transport to a Long Term Care facility, which applies to the transport from a patient's home to a DHW licensed long term care facility where the patient meets the requirements of the Mobility Challenged rate. This is not applicable to transports between Long Term Care facilities.
- 5.9. Ambulance service fees may be exempted or reduced under the following conditions:
 - 5.9.1. Exempted from payment of ambulance service fees
 - 5.9.1.1. Fees issued to Good Samaritans who required ambulance service due to actions taken to ensure the health and safety of others
 - 5.9.1.2. Evacuations or other unanticipated events at the discretion of DHW
 - 5.9.1.3. Declared Emergencies at the discretion of DHW
 - 5.9.1.4. Clinical quality issues as identified by the Provincial Medical Director
 - 5.9.1.5. At the discretion of the DHW where it is deemed in the public interest
 - 5.9.1.6. Fees issued to deceased patients, where it is determined that the estate is without the funds to pay the service fee(s) and the executor of the estates submits written confirmation.
 - 5.9.2. Reduced ambulance service fee
 - 5.9.2.1. New residents: will have their fees reduced to the Nova Scotia resident rate with proof of a valid Nova Scotia health card (does not include transports defined as third party insured).

6. POLICY GUIDELINES

- 6.1. N/A

7. ACCOUNTABILITY

- 7.1. The Deputy Minister has accountability for the administration of this policy.
- 7.2. The Executive Director of EHS has responsibility for on-going monitoring and enforcement of this policy.

8. MONITORING / OUTCOME MEASUREMENT

- 8.1. The Executive Director of EHS will monitor the implementation, performance and effectiveness of this policy.
- 8.2. The Executive Director of EHS is responsible for ensuring that the Ground Ambulance Service Fee policy and processes are adhered to.

9. REPORTS

- 9.1. Monthly Service Fee Reconciliation

10. REFERENCES

- 10.1. Canada Health Act
- 10.2. Health Services and Insurance Act
- 10.3. Emergency Health Services Act
- 10.4. Emergency Management Act
- 10.5. 2101 Ground Ambulance Service Fee Appeals
- 10.6. A Regulations Respecting Ambulance User Fees
- 10.7. Volunteer Services Act

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1. Appendix A: Regulations Respecting Ambulance User Fees

12. INQUIRIES

- 12.1. EHS Service Fees
Emergency Health Services
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