

## **Transplant Patient Expense Reimbursement Program Bulletin – January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023**

In May 2009, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHTLC) launched a funded program that reimburses eligible patients for relocation accommodation expenses as outlined in the MOHTLC Transplant Patient Expense Reimbursement (TPER) Policy. The program is intended to support patients waiting for heart, heart-lung, or lung transplantation who are required to relocate near the transplant hospital. While the Ministry is responsible for the TPER policy and eligibility requirements, the Ontario Health – Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) administers the program on behalf of the Ministry.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, the Ministry has increased the monthly allowance from \$1500 per month to \$2500 per month to reflect increases in rental accommodation expenses. Application criteria have also been redefined to clarify patients' eligibility and expanded to include patients who require Ventricular Assist Devices (VADs) implantation.

### **RATIONALE FOR TPER**

TPER is focused on heart, heart-lung, lung, and small bowel transplant patients since access to transplantation services for these groups is markedly different from that of other transplant patients. Many transplant hospitals require these potential transplant recipients to relocate temporarily within a specific distance from the transplant hospital as a condition to be waitlisted. The hospital requirement is based on the short viability time associated with recovery and transplantation of heart, heart-lung, lungs, and small bowels, and the intense preparation and monitoring required pre- and post-surgery.

### **OBJECTIVE OF TPER**

The purpose of TPER is to assist in alleviating the financial burden on patients waiting for heart, heart-lung, lung, small bowel transplantation, or VAD implantation whom the transplant hospital requires to relocate within reasonable proximity of the transplant hospital to be waitlisted or to obtain post-transplant surgery discharge care or receive a VAD implant. Ultimately, TPER aims to facilitate access for these patients to transplant services.

### **PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

All applicants to TPER must satisfy all the following:

1. Must be an Ontario resident and be insured by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).
2. Be a patient waiting for heart, heart-lung, lung, or small bowel transplantation or patients requiring the implantation of Ventricular Assist Devices (VADs).



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3. Reside a minimum mileage distance (listed below) from the transplant hospital, as required by the transplant hospital policy, as a prerequisite for placement on the transplant hospital's waiting list and/or post-surgery discharge assessment.
    - a. Adult patients: minimum 100KM away from the closest adult transplant hospital
    - b. Paediatric patients: minimum 55KM away from the Hospital for Sick Children
  4. Declare all other sources of funding they have received to directly or partially cover relocation accommodation expenses (e.g. David Foster Foundation).
  5. Provide receipts or documentation that supports actual accommodation expenses eligible under TPER after expenses have been incurred.
  6. Must be referred by a transplant program that the applicant has been or will be listed or that follow-up care post-transplant is required, as specified on the Support for Relocation Form.

To determine if you or someone you know is eligible for TPER, please speak to your transplant hospital or the Ontario Health – Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN). The transplant team at the hospital will help facilitate applications.

Participating heart, heart-lung, lung, small bowel transplant, and VAD programs include:

- The University of Ottawa Heart Institute
- Hospital for Sick Children
- University Health Network (Toronto General Hospital)
- London Health Sciences Centre

Application forms are available at: [www.giftoflife.on.ca/en/transplant.htm#financialassistance](http://www.giftoflife.on.ca/en/transplant.htm#financialassistance)

## EXPENSES COVERED

TPER will reimburse relocation accommodation expenses up to a maximum of \$2,500 per month and up to a maximum of \$30,000 for 12 months for eligible applicants. For short-term stays of less than 28 days, TGLN will reimburse relocation accommodation expenses with a daily reimbursement maximum of \$125/day for up to \$2,500/ month. Eligible patients staying a minimum of 28 consecutive days may be reimbursed a maximum of \$2,500/month. In addition, TPER may reimburse up to a maximum of 3 months (or as required for medical reasons related to transplant surgery) of relocation accommodation expenses after post-transplant surgery discharge.

TPER only reimburses accommodation expenses related to relocation. Specific examples of accommodation may include apartment/condominium rental, family/friends who provide receipts for homestays, Ronald McDonald House, and temporary hotel accommodations.

While applicants may experience other expenses related to relocation, such as utility, telephone, and transportation costs, these are not eligible expenses under the TPER policy. Reimbursement is dependent upon

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meeting eligibility criteria as outlined in the Ministry’s policy, a completed application package, and the submission of supporting documentation. Upon application approval, patients will submit their receipts or supporting documentation for the TPER- eligible accommodation expenses incurred to receive reimbursements.

## **PRE-PAYMENT FOR QUALIFIED APPLICANTS**

Most transplant hospitals require heart, heart-lung, lung, and small bowel patients to be near the transplant hospital before listing patients for transplantation. In some instances, patients may be unable to relocate due to financial hardship. A patient receiving qualified government support or social assistance may be eligible for pre-payment of relocation accommodation expenses. Applicants must meet the criteria by providing evidence of receiving government support and/or social assistance or other extenuating circumstances.

Examples of Qualified programs include, but are not limited to:

- Ontario Works
- Ontario Disability Support Program (OSDP)
- Employment Insurance Benefits
- Guaranteed Annual Income System for Seniors
- Rent-Geared-to Income housing programs

Other government support and social assistance programs and circumstances may be considered using the Ministry of Health’s policy.

Eligibility for pre-payment is subject to the Ministry’s policy. Although the applicant can receive funding for the first month from TPER without a receipt, upon relocation, the applicant must provide evidence that the pre-payment was used for relocation accommodation.

Applicants also need to provide proof to TGLN that the shelter portion of their benefits is going toward their permanent home address and not funding their temporary accommodations. TGLN may deduct some of the TPER funding allocated to the applicant if these benefits have been used to fund temporary accommodation costs.

If you require further information, please contact the TPER Coordinator at [tper@ontariohealth.ca](mailto:tper@ontariohealth.ca) or 1-888-977-3563.