



Information about BC Palliative Care Benefits (Drugs and Medical Equipment)

BC Palliative Care Benefits support individuals of any age who have reached the end stage of a life-threatening disease or illness and who want to receive medically appropriate palliative care at home. B.C. residents who are eligible to receive palliative care services at home can:

- receive PharmaCare assistance with the cost of palliative medications—through PharmaCare Palliative Care Drug Plan (Plan P)
- access certain palliative medical supplies and equipment—through the local health authority

Eligibility

The individual's **physician** or **nurse practitioner** determines the patient's medical eligibility for palliative care benefits.

BC Palliative Care Benefits are available to all B.C. residents with active MSP coverage who:

- are living at home*, and
- have been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness or condition, and
- have a life expectancy of up to six months, and
- consent to the focus of care being palliative rather than treatment aimed at cure.

For guidance in determining patient's medical eligibility, please refer to [BC Palliative Care Benefits Program – Prescriber Guide](#).

BC Palliative Care Drug Plan

The BC Palliative Care Drug Plan (Plan P) covers 100% of the eligible costs of the prescription drugs and selected over-the-counter (OTC) drugs needed for care and treatment at home. Medications covered by the plan include:

- prescription medications prescribed for pain, symptom control and improved quality of life; and,
- certain OTC drugs required to supplement the prescription drugs and considered to be medically necessary for palliative care.

Medications covered are listed in the [BC Palliative Care Drug Plan formulary](#).

* "Home" is defined as wherever the patient is living, whether in their own home or with family or friends, in a supportive or assisted living residence, or in a hospice unit of a residential care facility. Residents of residential care facilities covered under PharmaCare Plan B (Permanent Residents of Licensed Care Facilities) are not eligible for Plan P.

Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefits

Health Authorities provide medical supplies and equipment benefits at no charge to eligible individuals based on need as assessed by the health authority's designated health professional(s). Coverage includes access to certain medical supplies and equipment that support the delivery of safe palliative care at home.

Eligible patients are those who:

- are in the last six months of their lives, and
- may potentially require care in a hospital if their palliative medical supplies and equipment are not provided.

A list of medical supplies and equipment provided by the health authorities is included in *Appendix A – Medical supplies and equipment* of the [BC Palliative Care Benefits Program – Prescriber Guide](#).

How to Apply

► New Registrations

Once a physician or nurse practitioner has certified that a patient meets the medical criteria, the physician or nurse practitioner completes a BC Palliative Care Benefits Registration form (HLTH 349) and faxes it to both Health Insurance BC (for drug coverage) and the home and community care office of the health authority (to initiate an assessment for palliative medical supplies and equipment).

The registration form is available on the [BC Palliative Care Benefits website](#).

Please fax the form to:

- Health Insurance BC at **250-405-3587**, and
- the appropriate **Home and Community Care office** of the local health authority, as listed in the blue pages of your telephone directory.

► Reassessment/Cancellation

Physicians and nurse practitioners are required to re-assess a patient's eligibility at 12 months. If not, the patient's eligibility may be subject to verification for continued benefits. (See the [BC Palliative Care Benefits Program – Prescriber Guide](#)).

► Coverage Confirmation Line

To confirm registration in the BC Palliative Care Drug Plan, the physician or nurse practitioner can phone the Palliative Care Confirmation Line at Health Insurance BC (HIBC) at **250-405-3612**. The line is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.