

BC Palliative Care Benefits

BC Palliative Care Benefits cover certain drugs, medical supplies, and equipment that are used in palliative care. These benefits are available to individuals (of any age) who have reached the end stage of a life threatening disease or illness and who wish to receive palliative care at home¹.

Who is eligible?

A British Columbia resident² who wants to receive palliative care at home can ask their physician or nurse practitioner to assess their eligibility for benefits. If they are eligible, their physician or nurse practitioner submits a registration form. Once registered, benefits continue as long as the person is in need of palliative care.

What is covered?

BC Palliative Care Benefits include two types of benefits:

- 1 PharmaCare BC Palliative Care Drug Plan (Plan P)—Medications for palliative care.
- 2 Local health authority—Assessment of, and coverage for, certain medical supplies and equipment³.

For more information, please read below.

1 BC Palliative Care Drug Plan

This drug plan covers 100% of the eligible costs of palliative care prescription drugs and certain over the counter drugs listed in the Plan P formulary, including:

- **prescription medications** prescribed for pain, symptom control and improved quality of life, and
- **certain over-the-counter drugs** that are needed to supplement the prescription drugs and are considered medically necessary to support palliative care.

For the list of drugs in the formulary, visit www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/palliativecareformulary.pdf.

2 Health Authority—Medical Supplies and Equipment

If you are being cared for at home, a member of your local home and community care team will assess your need for medical supplies and equipment³.

Your health authority provides the supplies/equipment at no charge. Supplies and equipment for palliative care at home may include:

- medication administration supplies such as needles and syringes
- intravenous therapy supplies
- urinary and incontinence supplies
- wound care supplies
- drug delivery pumps
- equipment such as walkers, wheelchairs, mechanical lifts, commodes, bathing aids and hospital beds

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Your need for supplies and equipment is assessed at least monthly. If you no longer qualify for BC Palliative Care Benefits, you may need to purchase supplies and equipment yourself.

Please note: Home oxygen is not covered under BC Palliative Care Benefits; it is subsidized through the Home Oxygen Program in each health authority. To find out if you are eligible, contact your local health authority.

How do I register?

Your physician or nurse practitioner must certify that you meet the criteria for coverage and complete a *BC Palliative Care Benefits Registration* form. Your physician or nurse practitioner faxes this form to:

- Health Insurance BC (for PharmaCare drug coverage)
- The Home and Community Care office of your local health authority (to initiate an assessment of needed medical supplies and equipment).

When does coverage begin?

Drug coverage begins as soon as PharmaCare processes the registration (within 24 hours). You can then fill prescriptions at any pharmacy in British Columbia.

Medical supply and equipment coverage begins as soon as a member of the home and community care team of your local health authority has assessed your needs. The home and community care team contacts you when your registration for BC Palliative Care Benefits has been processed.

Other services may be available through your health authority. Check with your home and community care office for more information.

More Information

Basic Eligibility and Drug Coverage:

- Visit www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare or call Health Insurance BC:
 - From the Lower Mainland, call 604 683-7151
 - From the rest of B.C., call 1 800 663-7100

Medical Supplies and Equipment:

- Call the Home and Community Care office of your local health authority. For contact information:
 - See the blue pages of your telephone directory, or
 - phone HealthLink BC at 8-1-1, or
 - visit the HealthLink BC website at <http://find.healthlinkbc.ca>

Tip: In the Search field, enter "home and community care."

¹ "Home" means wherever the person is living, whether in their own home, with family or friends, or in a supportive/assisted living residence, or in a hospice unit of a residential care facility (that is, a community hospice bed that is not covered under PharmaCare Plan B). Your care facility can advise you whether you are covered by PharmaCare Plan B.

² BC residents covered by Health Canada's Non Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program or Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) need PharmaCare coverage of drug costs only for medications not covered by NIHB or VAC. Members of the Canadian Forces receive coverage through their employer and thus are not eligible.

³ The specific benefits available are determined by the health authority and through an assessment of need.