



February 19, 2025

1307134

Via electronic distribution

Re: NITAOP Payment Delays

Dear rural physicians:

Thank you for your continuous contributions to the delivery of medical services across rural British Columbia through the Northern and Isolation Travel Assistance Outreach Program (NITAOP). We write today to update you on NITAOP claims processing delays.

We have heard concerns from many of you regarding the time it takes to process your NITAOP claims once they are submitted. Claims currently undergo a two-part adjudication process split between the Ministry of Health and Health Insurance BC. Over time, this structure has led to worsening processing times across the two organizations. Currently, claims are taking three months or longer to be paid out, which is unacceptable.

We have asked the Ministry of Health to review the current process structure, and we are taking the following steps to address the backlog:

- 1) review of program policy and processes to identify streamlining opportunities,
- 2) prioritization of existing workload,
- 3) resourcing / staffing, and
- 4) review of alternative options for program administration.

To help with the processing of claims, the JSC implemented a policy change effective April 1, 2024, that requires all claims to be submitted within 90 days of the last day of travel. Understandably, given the current processing times, this may not feel like it has had a significant impact. While this policy is not currently being enforced, timely submission of claims eases the administrative burden on adjudicators by more evenly distributing claims over the fiscal year. We are hopeful that in combination with the above measures this will start to decrease wait times on payments. The Ministry and its partners are committed to resolving this issue permanently and are actively working on solutions.

...2

Thank you again for your continued contribution to the delivery of medical services to the rural population of British Columbia. Further updates to NITAOP policy and/or the claims submission process will be communicated as needed.

Sincerely,



Dr. James Card
Doctors of BC - Co-Chair
Joint Standing Committee on
Rural Issues



Kevin Brown
Ministry of Health - Co-Chair
Joint Standing Committee on
Rural Issues

pc: Carolyn Rudden, Director – Physician Services Branch, Ministry of Health
Brendan Stewart, Senior Manager – Physician Services Branch, Ministry of Health
Christina Beck, Director – Rural Issues, Doctors of BC