

Transplant Patient Expense Reimbursement Program

Bulletin I, May 1 2009

Trillium Gift of Life Network has launched the Transplant Patient Expense Reimbursement Program referred to as *TPER*. Patients waiting for heart, heart-lung, or lung transplantation who are required to relocate near the transplant hospital for the purposes of transplantation may now apply for reimbursement of qualified relocation accommodation expenses incurred May 1, 2009 and onwards.

TPER is a Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care funded program that coordinates reimbursement of qualified relocation accommodation expenses for eligible patients as outlined in the Ministry's policy. The Ministry is responsible for the TPER policy and eligibility requirements; Trillium Gift of Life Network is administering the program on behalf of the Ministry.

RATIONALE FOR TPER

TPER is focused on heart, heart-lung and lung transplant patients since access to transplantation services for these groups is markedly different from that of other transplant patients. Many transplant hospitals require heart, heart-lung and lung transplant patients to temporarily relocate within 2.5 hours (or other pre-determined travel thresholds in accordance with hospital policy) of a 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 and lungs.

Transplant hospitals do not require other transplant patients to relocate in order to be placed on a transplant waiting list. The viability times associated with other organs are longer than for hearts and lungs. Therefore, heart, lung and heart-lung patients face a unique and additional barrier to accessing life-saving transplants.

OBJECTIVE OF TPER

The purpose of TPER is to assist in alleviating the financial burden on patients waiting for heart, heart-lung or lung transplantation who are required by the transplant hospital to relocate within reasonable proximity of the transplant hospital to be waitlisted and/or to obtain post-transplant surgery discharge care. Ultimately, TPER aims to facilitate access for these patients to transplant services.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

All applicants to TPER must be insured under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) and are considered eligible where:

- i) The applicant is waiting for heart, heart-lung or lung transplantation and resides more than 2.5 hours driving distance from the transplant hospital as determined by the transplant hospital and has, as a condition of being listed for transplantation, temporarily relocated within proximity of the transplant hospital prior to being listed for transplantation.*

OR

- ii) The applicant is a patient pending listing for heart, heart-lung or lung transplantation and resides more than 2.5 hours driving distance from the transplant hospital as determined by the transplant hospital and the transplant hospital requires the patient to relocate; and the applicant will*

imminently relocate near the transplant hospital for the purposes of transplantation and he/she will immediately be waitlisted upon confirming relocation to the transplant hospital.

Trillium Gift of Life Network will verify patient eligibility for reimbursement of relocation expenses pre and/or post-surgery with relevant transplant hospitals.

All applicants are required to declare all other sources of funding he/she has received to directly cover or partially cover relocation accommodation expenses (e.g. David Foster Foundation).

EXPENSES COVERED

TPER will reimburse relocation accommodation expenses up to a maximum of ***\$650 per month, and up to a maximum of \$7,800 for 12 months*** for eligible applicants.

In addition, TPER may reimburse up to a maximum of 2 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, Ronald McDonald House and temporary hotel accommodations.

While applicants may experience other expenses related to relocation, utility, telephone and transportation costs are not eligible expenses under the TPER policy. Reimbursement is dependent upon meeting eligibility criteria as outlined in the Ministry's policy, completed application package and submission of supporting documentation.

PRE-PAYMENT FOR QUALIFIED APPLICANTS

Most transplant hospitals require heart, heart-lung and lung patients to be within the proximity of the transplant hospital before listing patients for transplantation. In certain cases, patients may not be able to relocate due to financial hardship. For a patient in receipt of qualified government support or social assistance, he/she may be eligible for pre-payment of relocation accommodation expenses through TPER. Qualified programs include Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Employment Insurance Benefits, Guaranteed Annual Income System for Seniors and Rent-Geared-to-Income housing programs. Other government support and social assistance programs and circumstances may be considered using the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's policy.

Eligibility for pre-payment is subject to the Ministry's policy. Applicants must demonstrate meeting the criteria by providing evidence of receipt of government support and/or social assistance or other extenuating circumstances. Upon relocation the applicant is required to provide support that the pre-payment was used for relocation accommodation, and on-going support must be provided for continued funding.

To determine if you or someone you know is eligible for TPER, please speak to your transplant hospital or Trillium Gift of Life Network. Participating heart, heart-lung and lung transplant programs include: The Ottawa Heart Institute, University Health Network (Toronto General Hospital), Hospital for Sick Children and London Health

Sciences Centre. Application forms are available at your transplant hospital and www.giftoflife.on.ca.

Trillium Gift of Life Network will be working closely with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and participating transplant hospitals to ensure that TPER is successfully launched. Regular TPER updates and bulletins will be posted online. If you require any further information, please contact TPER at tper@giftoflife.on.ca, or 416-619-2342/1-888-977-3563.