

Transplant Patient Expense Reimbursement Program Bulletin – April 1st, 2022

In May of 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 February 1, 2018, the Ministry has increased the monthly allowance from \$650 per month to \$1500 per month to reflect increases in rental accommodation expenses.

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 temporarily relocate within 2.5 hours (or other pre-determined travel thresholds by 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, lungs, and small bowels, and the intense preparation and monitoring required before and after the surgery.

OBJECTIVE OF TPER

The purpose of TPER is to assist in alleviating the financial burden on patients waiting for heart, heart-lung, lung, or small bowel 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, lung, or small bowel transplantation.
- ii) The applicant resides more than 2.5 hours driving distance from the transplant hospital as determined by the transplant hospital
- iii) The applicant has temporarily relocated or will temporarily relocate within proximity of the transplant hospital before being listed for transplantation and as a condition of being listed for transplantation and/or post-surgery discharge assessment.
- iv) The applicant has signed a declaration that all other funding sources specific to accommodation expenses have been exhausted.
- v) The applicant provides receipts or documentation that supports actual accommodation expenses eligible under TPER after expenses have been incurred.



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- vi) Transplant Programs have confirmed that the applicant has been or will be listed or that follow-up care post-transplant is required.

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, and small bowel transplant 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 your transplant hospital at: <http://www.giftoflife.on.ca/en/transplant.htm>.

EXPENSES COVERED

TPER will reimburse relocation accommodation expenses up to a maximum of \$1500.00 per month and up to a maximum of \$18000.00 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 for home stays, 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 meeting eligibility criteria as outlined in the Ministry's policy, a completed application package, and the submission of supporting documentation.

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

PRE-PAYMENT FOR QUALIFIED APPLICANTS

Most transplant hospitals require heart, heart-lung, lung, and small bowel patients to be within the proximity of the transplant hospital before listing patients for transplantation. In some instances, patients may not be able to relocate due to financial hardship. For a patient receiving qualified government support or social assistance, he/she may be eligible for pre-payment of relocation accommodation expenses. Applicants must demonstrate meeting 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
- Employment Insurance Benefits
- Ontario Disability Support Program (OSDP)

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- 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 and Long-Term Care'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 towards their permanent home address and not funding their temporary accommodations. If these benefits have been used to fund temporary accommodation costs, TGLN may deduct some of the TPER funding allocated to the applicant.

EXCEPTIONS REQUESTS

Patients who do not meet the standard TPER eligibility criteria, but require access to TPER for temporary relocation to access transplant care, may be eligible for exception requests. Patients who receive qualified government support or social assistance as the only source to fund a secondary residence, or any exceptional circumstances where the transplant program identifies a patient that needs to be considered for additional reimbursement above the current allowance of \$1,500/month, may also be eligible for exception requests. Exceptions to the TPER policy are reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis in accordance with TGLN's Exception Policy.

To apply for exception requests, transplant programs must complete an exception application form and a request letter signed by the transplant program's medical director. Applicants are encouraged to consult the transplant program and/or TPER coordinator for their eligibility for exception requests.

If you require any further information, please contact the TPER Coordinator at tper@giftoflife.on.ca or 416-619-2342/1-888-977-3563.