

# **First Step Policy**

Revised September 7, 2022

## **I. Purpose Statement**

The purpose of First Step is to advance access to health care by providing travel assistance to people living on the northern tip of Newfoundland's Northern Peninsula (NTNPN). To carry out its purpose of providing medical travel assistance, First Step will pay part of community members' medical travel expenses such as gasoline, meals, lodging and other expenses related to the medical travel. This purpose statement is the cornerstone of all policies regarding the distribution of First Step's assets.

## **II. Requesting First Step Assistance**

- A. Everyone requesting assistance from First Step must complete the Application for Medical Travel Assistance Form (Assistance Form). Once the applicant completes the Assistance Form, they must submit it to any member of the First Step Board of Directors (BoD).<sup>1</sup> We encourage applicants to fill out the on-line version.
- B. Applicants must complete all parts of the Assistance Form. As part of their submission, each applicant must disclose any outside financial and travel assistance including, but not limited to, government assistance, fund raising efforts, special gifts et. al.
- C. First Step is committed to providing assistance to those people in need of assistance. If the traveler, their family, or friends have done any fundraising to help the traveler this will significantly affect the help First Step may be able to provide.
- D. First Step prefers people request assistance in advance of their medical trip. But, we realize this is not always possible. If you are unable to request in advance, we require that you submit your request to First Step no later than 30 days after your medical trip.

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<sup>1</sup> If the applicant is working with a social worker and the applicant directs them, the social worker may submit the Assistance Form to First Step

- E. Once the First Step receives the Assistance Form, it will transmit to all the BoD for review and a consensus decision on the amount of assistance First Step will provide.

### **III. Reimbursement**

- A. First Step will provide assistance by reimbursement following completion of a medical trip based on receipts except as provided below:
  - a. For those traveling via private vehicle, First Step will provide the traveler with a pre-paid gasoline card. Upon return from the trip the traveler must return the card and provide the receipts.
  - b. The BoD may approve the provision of other pre-paid vendor cards in special circumstances.
  - c. The BoD may approve the direct payment to vendors (e.g. lodging)

#### **B. Reimbursement Rates**

- a. Private Vehicle
  - i. To Corner Brook: \$150 maximum
  - ii. To St. John's: \$300 maximum
  - iii. Out of Province: 15 cents/kilometer<sup>2</sup>
- b. Airplane Ticket
  - i. St. John's
    - 1. Reimburse for one way ticket up to \$500 based on receipts
    - 2. Reimburse round trip ticket up to \$850 based on receipts
  - ii. Out of Province
    - 1. Reimburse 50% of ticket based on receipts
- c. Lodging
  - i. Maximum per night \$100 based on receipt<sup>3</sup>
- d. Meals
  - i. Maximum per day \$30<sup>4</sup>

#### **C. Maximum Reimbursement Per Trip is \$1,500<sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> Same rate per kilometer as in Province travel

<sup>3</sup> Same rate for in and out of Province

<sup>4</sup> Same rate for in and out of Province

<sup>5</sup> First Step will annually evaluate the Maximum Reimbursement Per Trip

D. People receiving reimbursement of \$500 or less may request an E-payment.

#### **IV. Reimbursement for an Escort**

A. First Step will reimburse part of the airplane ticket cost for a required escort.<sup>6</sup>

a. The maximum reimbursement rate based on receipts will be as follows:

i. St. John's

1. Up half total for the escort

ii. Out of Province will be decided by BoD based on circumstances

B. First Step will not reimburse any additional cost for lodging for a required escort. However, if the patient is in the hospital, First Step will reimburse the patient for the required escort's lodging at the above reimbursement rates.

C. The patient may use part of their \$30/day meal reimbursement to help pay for an escort's meals.

#### **V. Travel Beyond the Closest Relevant Medical Facility**

To qualify for reimbursement, First Step expects patients to travel to the closest relevant medical facility to their home. Any exceptions to this must be justified in writing by the patient's applicable specialist doctor.

#### **VI. Other Travel Assistance and First Step**

First Step will deduct the amount of financial help the patient receives from other sources (e.g. fundraising) from the help First Step would otherwise provide.

#### **VII. Submission of Receipts/Relevant Documents**

In order to receive reimbursement, after the patient completes their medical travel the patient must submit all relevant receipts and a written note from the medical provider indicating that the patient did receive the medical care.

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<sup>6</sup> To qualify for reimbursement an escort must be required in writing by a medical professional.

## **VIII. Exceptions**

Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by all available BoD members.