



## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the first edition Extended Health Benefits (EHB) Information Bulletin. Recent consultations with health care professionals across the province identified the need for regular communication by the Ministry to those who access EHB program benefits on behalf of their clients. Extended Health Benefits Information Bulletins will be issued regularly by the Ministry to communicate program updates. This bulletin contains updates from the 2012-13 fiscal year. Please advise Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living (SAIL) if there is content you would like to see included in future editions of this bulletin.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS EQUIPMENT PROGRAM UPDATES**

### **Equipment Review**

Extended Health Benefits has undertaken a review of the equipment available through the Special Needs Equipment (SNE) and Paraplegia Programs to ensure that equipment is not a barrier to discharge from acute care or rehabilitation facilities, surgical initiatives or clients living in their own homes. While work on this project continues within the Ministry of Health, some recommendations have been approved and are included in the updates below.

### **Hospital Beds**

Effective May 1, 2013, all hospital beds issued by the SNE Program will be electric. Manual, crank-style, standard beds will no longer be issued by the program. In addition to the existing criteria for a standard hospital bed, the criteria for electric hospital beds will include a provision that the bed is required for a period of more than 6 months in duration (with the exception of palliative clients). Requisitioning authority for electric hospital beds will be expanded to include occupational and physical therapists, in addition to physiatrists. Confirmation that a home assessment has been completed will be required prior to the loan of an electric hospital bed.

Replacement of currently issued manual hospital beds will be phased in over a period of time. The first beds to be considered for replacement will be those where there has been a change in status and the manual bed is no longer meeting the functional needs of the client or the primary caregiver. An application form for hospital beds is being drafted. The information on completed forms will be used to prioritize the replacement of existing manual beds. The new hospital bed application form will be available at SNE depots in late April.

### ***Wide Hospital Bed Policy***

Electric hospital beds are 36" wide. For clients who weigh more than 450 pounds, a bariatric bed is available. Bariatric beds are 41.5" wide. In situations where a client is not considered safe in the 36" hospital bed and requires additional width due to girth or their physical ability and need for self care, a wider bed may be issued. Requests for wider beds should include a letter documenting the medical necessity for the extra width. For home care clients, confirmation that care will be provided on the wider bed is also required.

## **SNE PROGRAM UPDATES (Continued)**

### **Two Specialized Wheelchairs Policy**

The SNE policy that limited the loan of specialized wheelchairs (ultralite, power, power tilt in space and manual tilt in space) to one per individual, with a standard manual wheelchair for back-up, was reviewed. This policy was recently revised to allow the loan of two specialized wheelchairs under the following circumstances:

- Clients with a power tilt in space wheelchair who require constant tilt and are engaged in the community on a regular basis will be provided a manual tilt in space wheelchair as a back-up.
- Clients will be allowed to keep an ultralite manual wheelchair when transitioning to a power wheelchair if they have a degenerative condition (unplanned transition).

Applications for a second specialized wheelchair should clearly indicate how the above criteria are met.

### **Cushion Review**

A review of the specific models of cushions available through SNE was conducted and has resulted in the following changes, effective April 1, 2013:

- Invacare Matrix Posture Seat (PS) and Vicair Vector cushions have been added to the benefit list for the loan program. Requisitioning authority for these models is physiatrist, plastic surgeon, OT, PT, Regional Home Care Nursing Case Manager (in consultation with a PT or OT).
- Bye Bye Decubiti Cushions and Artificial Synthetic Sheepskins have been removed from the benefit list.
- Over time, Roho Quadro High and Low Profile cushions will replace the Roho High and Low Profile cushions currently loaned by the program.

A complete list of cushions available through the program will be included in the SNE Manual when it is updated.

### **Cushion Eligibility Policy Change**

Clients who *do not* use a wheelchair for their primary mode of mobility are eligible for the loan of one high-end cushion if they meet *all* of the following criteria:

- the client has a current pressure ulcer, past history of a pressure ulcer, or wound on the area of contact with the seating surface;
- the client has a Letter of Medical Necessity which demonstrates a valid medical rationale for the provision of this cushion; and,
- the client is eligible for coverage through the Supplementary Health Program, Seniors' Income Plan, or Family Health Benefits Program.

### **Special Needs Equipment Manual**

An updated manual that includes materials regarding the proper installation, safety, use and care of equipment was identified as a gap during the equipment review. The Saskatchewan Abilities Council (SAC) and SAIL will be undertaking this project and plan to have a new manual posted on-line this fall. If you have any suggestions regarding content for the manual, please forward them to SAC or SAIL by April 30, 2013.

General policies for all SAIL programs are already available on-line at [www.health.gov.sk.ca/sail-general-policies](http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/sail-general-policies).

### **Wheelchair Oxygen Cylinder Brackets**

Effective April 1, 2013, brackets to attach oxygen cylinders to wheelchairs will be available for recipients of SNE wheelchairs who are approved for the SAIL Home Oxygen Program. Clients can contact SNE directly to request this part.

## **SNE PROGRAM UPDATES (Continued)**

### **Transfer Boards**

Effective April 1, 2013, one basic model of transfer board will be available for loan with eligibility restricted to Supplementary Health, Seniors' Income Plan, or Family Health Benefits recipients. Requisitioning authority for transfer boards will be physiatrist, OT, PT, regional home care nursing case manager.

### **Bariatric Equipment**

Bariatric models of all equipment loaned by the SNE Program are available and will be provided if required.

### **Special Needs Equipment Requisitions**

Delays in the issuing of equipment can be the result of incomplete information on requisitions. Please note the following when completing SNE requisitions:

- Include a shipping (street) address as deliveries cannot be made to a PO Box.
- Indicate the discharge date to enable prioritization of discharge requests.
- Include equipment sizing information – height of walker, wheelchair size, etc.
- Provide an explanation if similar equipment was issued to the client previously.
- Provide client weight to determine if a bariatric model is required.
- Attach the applicable application form when ordering cushions, specialized wheelchairs or hospital beds.

## **PROSTHETICS AND ORTHOTICS PROGRAM UPDATES**

### **Ride Seating System**

Effective July 1, 2012, the Ride seating system was added to the Specialized Seating benefit list with the following criteria:

- full seating system is required (i.e. both back and seat, cushions alone are not a benefit);
- trial of available items (within reason) did not show improvement in posture or skin health;
- stable body weight;
- clear rationale for the system; and,
- involvement / assessment by a seating team.

Ride seating systems must be requisitioned by a physiatrist.

## **PARAPLEGIA PROGRAM UPDATES**

### **Specialized Equipment Orders**

Requests for specialized rehabilitation equipment for Paraplegia Program beneficiaries must be accompanied by price quotes from three suppliers. In cases where three quotes cannot be obtained, please provide a written explanation (for example, equipment is only available from one supplier).

## **CONTACT US**

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