

Operation Syrian Refugees Questions and Answers from Provinces and Territories^{*}

December 18, 2015

^{*} All content has been approved by IRCC, MHB as of December 18, 2015

Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP)

Q. What level of medical coverage will the Syrian refugees receive?

For all Syrian refugees, the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) administered by IRCC will provide basic coverage during any waiting periods imposed by the province or territory or during the period where the refugee has not yet applied for or been issued their provincial/territorial health coverage. In addition, the IFHP will provide all Syrian refugees with coverage for supplemental services and prescription medications for one year.

- *Basic coverage* is similar to what provinces and territories provide their residents. It includes hospital services and services provided by a doctor, including pre-and post-natal care, laboratory, diagnostic and ambulance services and vaccinations.
- *Supplemental coverage* is similar to what provinces and territories provide their residents on social assistance. It includes both services and products such as:
 - dental and vision care;
 - home care and long-term care;
 - services provided by allied health care practitioners including clinical psychologists, occupational therapists, speech language therapists, physiotherapists; and
 - assistive devices, medical supplies and equipment.
- *Medication coverage* is similar to what provinces and territories provide their residents on social assistance and includes coverage for most prescription medications.

For more information on what services are included in [basic](#), [supplemental](#) and [medication](#) coverage, including [dental benefits](#), please visit Medavie Blue Cross provider website at <https://provider.medavie.bluecross.ca/>. Benefits for each category can be found under the Benefit Grid/Drug Formulary link.

Q. How long will the Syrian refugees be covered under the Interim Federal Health Program?

Resettled Syrian refugees that are part of this initiative will receive IFHP coverage for up to one year. Once they receive health insurance from the province or territory that they settle in, the IFHP will only cover the cost of supplemental services, like dental and vision care, and prescription drugs.

Q. Will Syrian refugees have access to mental health services under the IFHP?

All Syrian refugees will receive supplemental coverage, which includes psychotherapy or psychology counselling in a private clinic or addiction centre, for a maximum of 10 sessions. (*See Supplemental Coverage Grid*).

Q. How does IRCC ensure that refugees are able to access registered providers in their new communities?

Prior to settling Government Assisted Refugees, IRCC will ensure that adequate settlement support is in place, including access to a registered health care provider.

In the case of privately sponsored refugees, sponsors themselves are responsible for determining that adequate resources are available and for sharing pertinent information with refugees.

Information is available on [IRCC's website](#) for both beneficiaries and health care providers. In the case of health care providers, the website includes instructions and information on eligibility, registration and how to submit a claim.

In addition, [Medavie Blue Cross](#) maintains a list of registered health care providers on their website.

Q. How do Syrian refugees receive services under the Interim Federal Health Program once they are settled in a community?

IFHP beneficiaries must visit health-care practitioners who are registered, or willing to register, with Medavie Blue Cross. To find a health-care provider who is registered with the IFHP, visit the 'Search IFHP Providers' list on the Medavie Blue Cross IFHP website at <http://www.ifhp-pfsi.ca>.

Only registered health-care providers who have been authorized to submit a claim for reimbursement will be reimbursed by Medavie Blue Cross. A claim from an un-registered provider will be put on hold until the provider completes the registration.

Neither IFHP beneficiaries nor other persons or organizations (i.e. private sponsors) acting on behalf of a beneficiary should submit claims when they have paid up-front for health-care services or products. These claims will not be reimbursed.

Q. How many health care providers are currently registered under the IFHP?

Over 35,000 health care providers are currently registered under the IFHP. The table below provides a breakdown by type of provider and by province as of December 15, 2015.

Provider Type	AB	BC	MB	NB	NL	NS	NU	NWT	ON	PEI	QC	SK	YK	Total
HOSPITAL	145	80	14	5	14	12	0	2	526	6	232	20	1	1057
MEDICAL SERVICES	3118	1294	101	14	22	72	0	1	15239	2	6534	309	2	26708
VISION (EYE) CARE	203	135	8	18	9	35	0	0	1026	5	160	82	0	1681
AUDIOLOGY	33	38	7	1	0	3	0	0	193	4	24	1	1	305
PHARMACY	452	342	68	42	57	107	0	3	1499	11	214	47	1	2843
PARAMEDICAL	45	39	3	16	2	29	0	0	401	5	111	8	0	659
INDIVIDUAL	6	46	3	1	0	7	0	0	82	0	11	1	0	157
DENTAL SERVICES	538	251	81	31	3	30	0	1	1087	8	526	62	0	2618
INTERMEDIATE CARE	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	10	0	0	31
OXYGEN	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	1	2	0	27
AMBULANCE	7	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	7	4	0	26
NURSING SERVICES	15	15	5	3	1	6	0	0	127	1	8	5	0	186
MEDICAL SUPPLIES	20	21	6	0	2	10	0	0	51	0	23	4	0	137
PERSONAL CARE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Total	4589	2264	297	132	111	311	0	7	20271	44	7861	545	5	36437

Note that these counts are subject to change.

[Medavie Blue Cross](#) maintains a [list of registered providers](#) on their website so that private sponsors, clients and others stakeholders can readily identify providers in their community. The [list of providers](#) is organized by province and territory and is current as of December 8, 2015.

Q. If a health care provider is interested, how can they register with the IFHP?

Health-care providers can sign up to become a registered provider by completing the [IFHP Provider Registration Form](#). Completed forms can be submitted to Medavie Blue Cross via post, fax or email. Providers also have the option of registering on the [provider's website](#) by clicking on the "Request Account" link on the top right of the screen and following through the process. For more detailed instructions on how to register, providers can call Medavie Blue Cross directly at 1-888-614-1880.

Note: Pharmacies must register to become an IFHP provider by [contacting Medavie Blue Cross directly](#) at 1-888-614-1880. Once registered with Medavie Blue Cross, pharmacies are required to contact their software vendors to update their carrier codes so that IFHP pharmacy claims can be submitted electronically to Medavie Blue Cross.

Q. What happens with Syrian Refugees who may be staying at Interim Lodging Sites (ILS)?

Depending on the number of refugees housed in ILS, they may receive health care services from teams of health professionals coordinated by the Public Health Agency of Canada at "mini-clinics" supported by resources from the Agency's National Emergency Strategic Stockpile.

If there are very few refugees in ILS, or if more complex health services are required, refugees would be referred to health care providers in the community. For example, anyone requiring hospitalization or emergency dental services would be transported to nearby provincial or territorial facilities. In these cases, costs would be covered on a fee for service basis through the Interim Federal Health Program.

Q. Does the IFHP provide coverage for healthcare services not covered under provincial/territorial health care insurance plans for one year from the date of arrival? (Requestor: NWT HHS, Dec 8)

For all Syrian refugees, the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) administered by IRCC will provide basic coverage during any waiting periods imposed by the province or territory or during the period where the refugee has not yet applied for or been issued their provincial/territorial health coverage. In addition, the IFHP will provide all Syrian refugees with coverage for supplemental services and prescription medications for one year.

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Q. Does the IFHP provide coverage for medical transportation in the event health care services are not available in the settlement communities? (Requestor: NWT HHS, Dec 8)

There are some limitations on what the IFHP will cover related to medical transportation. On the IFHP website, at www.cic.gc.ca/ifhp, please review the Basic Coverage Benefit Grid for the type of coverage the refugee has. A description of transportation benefits can be found near the end of that Grid.

Q. How will the refugees be categorized? Benefits under the IFHP vary depending on the categorization. There will be a need for the federal government to clearly articulate for each refugee what they will, and won't, cover under the IFHP. (Requestor: SK Health, Nov 18)

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Q. Can you confirm if IFHP Type 1 coverage (12 months) certificates will be given to the refugees prior to arriving at their destination in provinces and territories? Could you provide a list of coverage? (Requestor: Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors (MHLS), Nov 20)

The Interim Federal Health Program Certificate (IFHC) will be given to Syrian refugees by CBSA officers at the POE upon arrival in Canada. In some cases where eligibility could not be issued at a POE, IFHP coverage will be issued by an IRCC officer shortly after arrival.

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Q. What is the process for pre-approval from IFHP? (Requestor: MB MOH, Dec 7)

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Q. What is the IFHP billing process? (Requestor: MB MOH, Dec 7)

The IFHP provides several options for providers to determine whether the service or product is covered or not under the IFHP depending on their type (hospital, doctor, pharmacists, etc.) or their specialty/profession (general practitioner, psychiatrist, optometrist, etc). Claims can be mailed, faxed or submitted electronically to Medavie Blue Cross with the applicable information.

- **Health-Care Professionals** – *Secure Provider Web Portal and Electronic Claims Submission:* Medavie Blue Cross offers a secure provider web portal allowing hospitals, medical doctors, nurses, audiologists and other eligible health service providers to conveniently verify their patient’s eligibility, submit claims (7 a.m. to 12 a.m. 7 days per week) or prior approval requests (24/7) online. This portal enables them to pre-determine client eligibility for specific treatment and depending on their speciality, submit claims with real-time adjudication and confirmation of the amount to be paid by Medavie Blue Cross.
- **Pharmacies** – *Pharmacy Claims for Point of Sale (POS) Claims Transmissions:* Pharmacy providers can verify coverage for specific drugs and submit claims electronically to Medavie Blue Cross through Pharmacy Claims for Point of Sale (POS) Claims Transmissions. A beneficiary’s eligibility can be verified through the IFHP Secure Provider Web Portal.
- **Dentists-** can verify coverage for specific treatment and send claims electronically through CDAnet, DAcnet, or Reseau ACDQ to Medavie Blue Cross. A beneficiary’s eligibility can be verified through the IFHP Secure Provider Web Portal.

Certain claims are not available for electronic submission, and providers have to contact the Medavie Blue Cross Call Center or submit claims/special authorization requests by mail or fax. Paper claim forms can be downloaded from the secure provider web portal at <https://provider.medavie.bluecross.ca> or by faxing a request to Medavie Blue Cross. Paper claims can be faxed to 506-867-3841 or mailed to the following address:

Interim Federal Health Program
Medavie Blue Cross
644 Main St. PO Box 6000
Moncton, NB E1C 0P9

For more information on claim submission guidelines, please consult [IFHP Information Handbook for Health Care Professionals](#).

Q. Have Government Assisted Refugees been approved for a different tier of IFHP coverage? (Requestor ON MOHLTC, Nov 27)

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Q. Will Syrian refugees who have already arrived to Canada from the affected area be provided access to the same level of IFHP coverage as those arriving in December onward?

All Syrian refugees who have arrived starting November 4, 2015 will receive IFHP coverage.

For more information on what services are included in [basic](#), [supplemental](#) and [medication](#) coverage, including [dental benefits](#), please visit Medavie Blue Cross provider website at <https://provider.medavie.bluecross.ca/>. Benefits for each category can be found under the Benefit Grid/Drug Formulary link.

Q. Has the current federal government fully reversed the decisions made by the previous administration with respect to the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP)? If so, what changes will result? (Requestor: SK Health, Nov 18)

The Government has committed to restoring the Interim Federal Health Program and is working towards that goal. The temporary coverage announced after the Federal Court decision will stay in place until a new program is implemented. As a first step, under the resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees, privately-sponsored Syrian refugees will receive the same IFHP coverage that government-assisted refugees are getting.

For more information please consult the following statements:

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?ctr.sj1D=&ctr.mnthndVI=12&mthd=advSrch&ctr.dpt1D=6664&nid=1025029&ctr.lc1D=&ctr.tp1D=980&ctr.yrStrtVI=2014&ctr.kw=&ctr.dyStrtVI=1&ctr.aud1D=&ctr.mnthStrtVI=1&ctr.page=1&ctr.yrndVI=2015&ctr.dyndVI=31>

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=tp&ctr.page=1&nid=1025019&ctr.tp1D=930>

Q. Can providers claim the cost of interpretive services used for mental health sessions from the Interim Federal Health Program? Is it feasible that interpreter costs for psychology sessions could be pre-approved when submitting the request to the IFHP? (Source: MB MOH, Dec 7)

Providers can claim the cost of interpretation services for psychotherapy or counselling services. The IFHP will reimburse the cost of interpretation services up to \$28.95/hour. The request for interpretation should be submitted together with the request for psychotherapy or counselling sessions.

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Q. It appears that the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) is limited to therapy (care) provided by a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist. We are wondering if there is any room to include registered clinical social Workers (MSWs) who also provide counselling services. (Requestor: MB MOH, Dec 7)

The therapist must be a registered clinical psychologist licensed by the provincial/territorial College of Psychologists. In Manitoba, this would be Manitoba Psychology Association which is a provincial regulatory organization for the practice of psychology in the province.

Q. Does the IFHP cover up to 10 visits to a therapist per person or per family? (Requestor: MB MOH, Dec 7)

The IFHP will cover up to 10 visits to a therapist for each eligible beneficiary, including children. This is not limited to a family unit. Any additional treatment must be pre-authorized by the IFHP Claim

Q. How will mental health needs/trauma be resourced? (Requestor: SK Health, Nov 18)

IFHP does not provide services directly but reimburses health care providers for covered services rendered to eligible clients. For more information on mental health services covered under the IFHP please consult [basic](#), and [supplemental](#) coverage. For more information please visit Medavie Blue Cross provider website at <https://provider.medavie.bluecross.ca/>. Benefits for each category can be found under the Benefit Grid/Drug Formulary link.

Q. Will mental health assessment be done on arrival at the Point of Entry (POE) & interim lodging sites? Who will be conducting the assessments? (Requestor: Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors (MHLS), Nov 20)

It is anticipated that primary healthcare and psychosocial support will be available for those who require it at interim lodging sites.

Q. Elderly individuals relocating may require additional supports such as personal care homes, home care, and long-term care? How will this be resourced? (Requestor: SK Health, Nov 18)

Refugees will be given an Interim Federal Health Program certificate upon landing in Canada and will receive health coverage for personal care, home care, and long-term care through that program for up to one year.