

Information Sheet At Home Program Medical Benefits Transition to Disability Assistance

April 10, 2007

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (MEIA) and Ministry of Children and Family Development have introduced new procedures to streamline the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) designation application process for young people with disabilities receiving Medical Benefits from the At Home Program (AHP).

If you are 17 years old and are planning to apply for the PWD designation when you turn 18, you can begin your application to meet the financial and medical criteria for the designation six months before your 18th birthday. As an alternative to submitting a PWD Designation Application form, you may give permission to the ministries to share medical and functional assessments you have already provided in support of other requests. This process is intended to reduce the information you are required to provide for MEIA to determine your medical eligibility for the designation.

To apply, you must complete the following steps:

STAGE 1 – Start Six Months before your 18th Birthday

- ✓ Phone (or ask your parent or guardian to phone) the Employment and Income Assistance office nearest you.
- ✓ Explain that you currently receive At Home Program Medical Benefits and want to apply for the PWD designation.
- ✓ The ministry worker will book an appointment for you and ask you to bring a copy of the letter you received from the At Home Program.
- ✓ Staff may be able to conduct the appointment at your home if needed.
- ✓ **First Appointment:** The purpose of this appointment is to assess your financial eligibility for PWD, and to initiate a process to confirm your medical eligibility for PWD.
 - A ministry worker will ask you to complete a BC Employment and Assistance (BCEA) application form.
 - The worker will also ask you to complete a separate consent form that will permit the At Home Program to share medical reports and assessments about your needs with MEIA.
 - The worker will then forward a copy of the signed consent form to MEIA's Health Assistance Branch (HAB) in Victoria.
 - HAB will review the medical information you have already provided to the At Home Program. This information may help determine your eligibility for the PWD designation and, if required, medical supplies.
 - HAB staff will contact you if further information or a full PWD designation application form is needed.
 - If you are approved for the PWD designation, HAB will send you a letter stating that your eligibility for the designation will be effective on your 18th birthday. A separate letter will list the medical supplies that will be covered.
 - If you have been receiving medical supplies from the At Home Program that are not available through HAB, HAB staff will be available to work with you to find alternatives if required. If necessary, the At Home Program will approve an additional three-month supply to ensure that you do not run out of supplies during the transition period.

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STAGE 2 – Month of Your 18th Birthday

- ✓ **Intake Appointment:** A worker will contact you to set up an appointment on the last week of the month before your 18th birthday to complete a form to confirm your financial eligibility for disability assistance. They will also explain other health supplements for which you may be eligible.
- ✓ **If you meet the financial and medical eligibility criteria for disability assistance, your first cheque will be mailed to you on your 18th birthday.**

Questions and Answers: At Home Program Medical Benefits– PWD Transition

Q.

What's the difference between At Home Program Medical Benefits and the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) designation? What kind of financial assistance can I expect?

A.

PWD is different from the At Home Program. Eligibility for PWD designation is based on both financial and medical criteria. The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance assesses individual financial circumstances and provides monthly support and allowances that are intended to assist with disability-related costs. A single person on PWD receives \$531.42 for support and up to \$375 (maximum) for shelter, for a total of \$906.42 per month. The actual amount of financial assistance you will receive per month will depend on your financial circumstances.

Q.

What kind of health coverage does PWD provide?

A.

PWD also provides a range of health supplements including Medical Services Plan (MSP) coverage, no deductible PharmaCare, optical and dental coverage, medical equipment and supplies and other supplements. Health Assistance Branch staff will advise you if there are differences in coverage for medical supplies, and will assist you in identifying alternate items and/or resources if required. At your second appointment, the ministry worker will explain the other health supplements for which you may be eligible.

Q.

Why should I start the process to apply for disability assistance six months before my 18th birthday?

A.

Starting the application process early will ensure a smooth transition to PWD from the At Home Program on your 18th birthday, by allowing plenty of time for you to obtain documents required for eligibility or to address any issues related to income or assets that are identified at your first appointment.

Q.

Will I have to complete a Three-Week Work Search or an Orientation?

A.

If your medical condition precludes you from completing a search for employment you may be exempt from these requirements. However, if your medical conditions limits the extent of a work search, but does not preclude you from looking for work, your efforts should be noted on the Work Search Activities Record (EIA0077). This will be assessed by the ministry worker at your first appointment.

Q.

What types of documents are required to assess my eligibility for the PWD designation?

A.

Medical Documentation: MEIA staff will review documentation you have already provided to the At Home Program to determine your medical eligibility for the PWD designation. In most cases, there should be sufficient information to determine your eligibility based on those documents. If the information is not sufficient, the consent form you signed will give staff permission to talk to your doctor or other professionals (such as an Occupational Therapist) about your needs. In very few cases, staff may ask you to have a PWD Designation Application form completed.

Financial Documentation: At your first appointment, the ministry worker will provide you with a list of documents that are required to assess your financial eligibility for PWD, which include:

- **Person Identification**, including:
 - A social insurance card and two of the following: Birth Certificate, CareCard, BCID, or Passport.
- **Income and Asset Information**, including:
 - Any recent income information
 - Bank Profile Information
 - Financial Records for savings such as RESP's Bonds, RRSP's, GIC's and Trust Funds
 - Vehicle registration
- **Shelter/Proof of Residence**, including
 - Current rent receipts, rental/lease agreement and recent utility bills (if renting)
 - Mortgages, most recent property tax assessment, recent utility bills (if you a homeowner).

Q.

The wheelchair provided to me through the At Home Program is owned by the Red Cross. Do I have to get a new chair? What if repairs or a replacement chair is needed?

A.

You can continue to use any medical equipment (including wheelchairs) provided to you by the At Home Program. PWD may provide coverage for repairs or a replacement item. Equipment funded by MEIA becomes your personal property. Equipment provided through the At Home Program should be returned to the Red Cross when it is no longer needed.

Contact Information:

General information about PWD assistance and Medical and Health Services is available on the MEIA web site: <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/pwd.htm>.

To set up a first appointment, call a ministry office in your community. A directory is available on the ministry's web site at: <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/contacts/city.htm>.

If you are unable to locate an office for your community, call:

- the ministry's Automated Telephone Inquiry toll-free information line at: **1 866 866-0800**; or
- Enquiry BC at **1-800-663-7867**

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Ministry of
Employment and
Income Assistance

Health Assistance Branch staff can be reached at: 1 888 221-7711. They can answer questions related to the medical criteria for the PWD designation and the differences between PWD and At Home Program Medical Benefits.

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