

NORTHERN RURAL CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION POLICY

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A permanent physician that practices in one or more of the RSA communities covered by the Rural Subsidy Agreement (RSA) for the number of years set out in the table below is eligible for additional RCME funding. Funding amounts are based on the degree of isolation of his/her community as determined by the Joint Standing Committee (JSC). Based on the Ministry of Health's calculation, all communities in Northern Health, with the exception of Prince George, are 'A' communities (most isolated). Prince George is a 'B' community.

Communities	Up to 2 years	In the 3 rd & 4 th year	Over 4 years
'A' Communities: General Practice	\$1,320	\$3,520	\$5,720
'B' Communities: General Practice	\$ 440	\$2,640	\$4,840
'A' Communities: Specialists	\$1,800	\$4,800	\$7,800
'B' Communities: Specialists	\$ 600	\$3,600	\$6,600

The above RCME support is in addition to the CME support provided to all physicians by the Working Agreement between the BCMA and MOH.

RELOCATING BETWEEN RSA ELIGIBLE COMMUNITIES

Moving to Eligible Communities

A physician who qualifies in accordance with the Eligibility Criteria and who moves to another community covered by this agreement continues to get credit for time spent in the previous community but receives the RCME amount appropriate to the new community. A physician may request unspent/banked RCME funds be transferred to another Health Authority when relocating to another community covered by the RSA outside of Northern Health.

Moving to In-eligible Communities

A physician who qualifies in accordance with the Eligibility Criteria and who does not stay in a community covered by this agreement for the entire 12 months is eligible for a proportionate amount of the sum set out in the Eligibility Criteria. If the physician uses the entire sum and subsequently leaves before the end of the 12-month period, any overpayment is owed to Northern Health.

RETIRING FROM REGULAR PRACTICE

When a physician retires from regular practice, he/she can use accumulated RCME Funds for up to three years from the date of retirement, if his/her intent is to provide locum services in rural areas while maintaining residency in British Columbia. After the three year period, any unspent funds revert back to the community fund.

Locums

A locum physician is not eligible for RCME funding unless that locum physician resides and practices within eligible RSA communities for a period of at least nine (9) months. A locum who does not meet the eligibility criteria for RCME may submit a written application for review as an exceptional circumstance.

RCME BANK

A physician may 'bank' enhanced RCME, except that the eligibility for enhanced RCME for any year expires at the end of two subsequent years (for greater clarity, the 'bank' can contain up to three years of enhanced RCME). Upon expiry of eligibility, or upon leaving the communities covered by this agreement, any sum remaining from that set aside for that physician transfers to Northern Health.

REVERTED FUNDS

Northern Health may use any enhanced RCME reverting to it under sections 'RCME Bank', 'Moving to Eligible Communities' or 'Moving to In-eligible Communities', in agreement with the MAC, for CME purposes other than the payment of amounts set out in the Eligibility Criteria.

COURSES AND CONFERENCES

Accredited Courses and Conferences

Claims may only be made **after** attendance at a course and/or conference. A minimum of **3.5 credit hours per day is required for each day of CME reimbursement**. Registration receipts, cancelled cheques, other documentation showing dates and location **must** be submitted with the application. Social activities included in the cost of the registration will not be reimbursed.

Physicians undertaking learning where travel is not integral to participation will only be reimbursed for tuition/materials fees and overhead fees. Elective travel and accommodation will not be reimbursed.

Non-Accredited Courses and Conferences

Physicians must get pre-approval for non-accredited courses and/or conferences in order to secure funding support. Applications must be endorsed by the Chief of Staff or HSDA Medical Director and must be accompanied by the following:

1. Educational objectives;
2. Techniques for the attainment of those objectives;
3. Ways in which the applicant's practice of medicine will be significantly changed;
4. How the applicant will know that his/her educational objectives had been met;
5. Registration receipts, cancelled cheques and other documentary evidence; showing the name of the organization, date and location of meeting or course (for mentorship programs, a letter from the mentoring physician outlining the agenda items); and
6. Confirmation of a minimum of 3.5 medical education hours per day claimed;

Physicians whose applications are rejected may request an appeal by the HSDA Medical Director or Vice-President of Medicine.

PAYMENT

Transportation

Transportation costs will be reimbursed at the rate of 50 cents per km (\$0.50) to a maximum not exceeding economy airfare plus necessary ground transportation. Receipts are required for airfare and all ground transportation. Local travel within 25 kilometers is not reimbursed. If redeeming points (such as Frequent Flyer Points) only actual expenses will be reimbursed.

Accommodation

Accommodation will be reimbursed up to \$300 per day when staying at a hotel. Accommodation will be reimbursed up to \$80 per day when staying with friends or family. Meals and expenses will be reimbursed up to \$95 per day. Please note: receipts are not required for meals. Details of accommodations must be provided on the application form.

Practice Overhead

Physicians in private practice may claim up to \$300 may be claimed for each full office day missed. All other physicians may claim \$180 per day for each day spent in education. Overhead to be claimed for a prorated amount for the portion of an office day missed.

Electronic Equipment Purchases

The RCME annual entitlement is allocated equally between two categories, one for electronic equipment (**50%**) and the other for all other eligible purchases and expenses (50%). Physicians are able to access that portion of the entitlement allocated to electronic equipment for other purposes (e.g. Conferences) but reimbursement of electronic equipment expenses will be limited to the amount allocated for this purpose.

Electronic equipment will encompass all that is deemed to have primarily a medical education component as approved by the Regional Coordinator, Chief of Staff or Medical Director and can include computers, DVD/VCR players, digital cameras, Personal Data Assistants and camcorders. Items purchased for office administration purposes or whose primary use is clinical practice are not eligible for reimbursement (e.g. fax/copiers, billing station, EMR).

Internet fees and Software

Internet fees will be reimbursed annually. Two internet statements are required, one from the beginning of the year and one from the end of the year being claimed. Only medical software is covered. Word processors, database managers, EMR billing software and other office-related software are **not** eligible for reimbursement.

Library Donations, Medical Books, Journals, Audio and Visual

Receipts for purchases must clearly indicate the date of purchase item(s) purchased (to determine RCME eligibility), and payment made in full. Donations of up to \$100 to the Northern Health Library or local medical library will be reimbursed. Purchase of medical books, journals, audio and videotapes are eligible for 100% reimbursement including PST/HST.

Membership Fees, Association Fees

Membership and association fees, as well as costs for journals that are benefits of membership, are not eligible for reimbursement.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURE

1. Complete the *Rural Continuing Medical Education Reimbursement Form*.
2. Attach all original itemized receipts (individually taped to letter size paper).
3. Forward package to:

Northern Continuing Medical Education Program
Suite 700 – 299 Victoria Street
Prince George, BC
V2L 5B8
4. Upon receiving the complete application package it will be determined if adequate funds are available, approve the application within allocation limits and available funds then forward the approved package to finance for processing.

Author(s): Regional Coordinator, Northern Continuing Medical Education Project

Issuing Authority: Vice President of Medicine

Date Issued (I), REVISED (R), reviewed (r): I: May 13/09 R: Oct 01/09 R: Nov 13/09 R: May 14/10 R: Jan 19/11

R: June 10/11 **R: September 23/11**

This material has been prepared solely for use at Northern Health (NH). NH accepts no responsibility for use of this material by any person or organization not associated with NH. No part of this document may be reproduced in any form for publication without permission of NH. A printed copy of this document may not reflect the current, electronic version on the NH iPortal.