



H1N1 Compensation for Physicians

October 2009

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1. PURPOSE

This document sets out the payment mechanisms to ensure that physicians are appropriately compensated in the event of an H1N1 pandemic.

2. BACKGROUND

A resurgence of the H1N1 virus is expected in fall of 2009. The Medical Services Division, Ministry of Health Services, has engaged with the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport and the BC Medical Association to assist in H1N1

planning for physicians and, in particular, to establish payment mechanisms to ensure that physicians are appropriately compensated in the event of an H1N1 pandemic.

3. TEMPORARY PAYMENT CODES

In anticipation of an increased volume of patients for physicians during an H1N1 pandemic outbreak, two new temporary fee codes have been approved by the Medical Services Commission and introduced in the Medical Services Commission Payment Schedule, Section of General Practice, to facilitate treatment by physicians: “Office Visit

for H1N1 Virus” and “Telephone Advice Regarding H1N1 Virus” (See Table 1).

In the event of an H1N1 pandemic, both proposed new fee items would be temporary (time-limited) and would be instituted/ concluded at the declaration of the Provincial Health Officer.

Table 1: Temporary Payment Codes

<p>PG13700 GP Office Visit for H1N1 Virus</p>	<p>\$31.15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted to General Practitioners (GPs) who have not billed a specialist consult in the previous 12 months. • Payable for patients with suspected or active H1N1 symptoms only. • Not intended for providing general information on H1N1. • Not payable in addition to any other office visits for same patient, same day. • Not subject to Daily Volume Discounting. • Not currently effective until declared by the Provincial Health Officer.
<p>PG13705 Telephone Advice Regarding H1N1 Virus</p>	<p>\$14.74</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payable when there is a pre-existing, ongoing and longitudinal professional relationship between the patient and the physician. • Payable for direct physician telephone advice about the patient’s suspected or active H1N1 symptoms, provided to the patient or the patient’s caregiver. • Not intended for providing general information on H1N1. • Phone call must be initiated by patient or patient representative. • Dates of service under this item and a brief notation of the advice given should be documented in the patient’s record together with the name of the patient’s representative (if appropriate). • Includes providing a new prescription or prescription renewal if rendered. • Limited to two (2) calls per patient per day. • Available to both GPs and specialist physicians. • Became effective October 1, 2009.

Note: Associated ICD-9 codes to be used with the H1N1-related fees include 487 INFLUENZA; 487.0 WITH PNEUMONIA; 487.1 WITH OTHER RESPIRATORY MANIFESTATIONS; and 487.8 WITH OTHER MANIFESTATIONS.

4. PHYSICIAN LIFE AND DISABILITY BENEFITS DURING THE H1N1 PANDEMIC

In regards to physician life and disability benefits during the H1N1 pandemic, physicians in B.C. have a comprehensive suite of options available to them in the event of total or partial disability regardless of injury caused by a pandemic infection.

Benefits under the *Physician Master Agreement/ Benefits Subsidiary Agreement* include the Physicians Disability Insurance Plan and the

Quarantine Income Replacement. Optional insurance plans that supplement coverage are available to physicians through the BC Medical Association, including Disability Income Insurance, Term Life Insurance and Office Overhead Insurance. In addition, WorkSafeBC provides insurance coverage through a no-fault insurance system that protects both the employers who pay for it and the workers who receive benefits.