

Subject: Update: Non-urgent Transportation for Medical Appointments

Happy New Year!

Last spring I hosted a meeting to address concerns related to access to transportation services to access medical appointments in Temiskaming Shores and the surrounding district. Since then, a working group has been established to identify solutions to transportation barriers, assess trends, and explore innovative options, including potential grant applications.

This overview highlights key transportation services and ongoing efforts to improve access to healthcare in the region.

May 2024:

New Liskeard Lion's Club generously reached out to offer support and donated funds to help purchase the Ferno Transcend Stair Chair with PowerTraxx. The power chair eliminates accessibility barriers, making it easier for individuals to travel to and from medical appointments. The chair can transport individuals up and down an average of 40 flights of stairs with the touch of a button! The chair is housed at the Temiskaming Hospital and can be used by community partners, pending the completion of a service agreement.

Fall 2024:

Ontario Northland Bus: Reduced frequency of the bus route to Smooth Rock Falls has created a barrier to accessing the Detox Center, which is now only available every other day, instead of the daily service it previously provided.

December 2024:

Transportation Inventory: A Transportation Inventory Handout was developed as a resource to help individuals stay informed about available services and to provide guidance on where to seek assistance when they are financially unable to access private transportation options. Please feel free to share widely this resource attached (Transportation Inventory Doc.). We hope that health care providers can distribute this resource anytime a patient requires out of area treatment.

Northern Travel Grant: The Northern Travel Grant increased reimbursements for overnight trips to better reflect people's needs and increased costs, including:

1. Increasing the accommodation allowance from \$100 to \$175 per night, as well as increasing the total allowance for eight or more nights from \$550 to \$1,150.
 2. Reducing the travel distance requirement to be eligible for overnight accommodation allowance from 200 kilometres to 100 kilometres.
 3. Expanding eligibility to include medical travel companions accompanying a patient who is hospitalized.
1. Eliminating the need for a signature from the referring health care provider, making the

application process faster and easier.

2. Removing the 100-kilometre deductible and reimbursing every kilometre travelled to help offset higher gas prices.
3. Adding more eligible health care providers and more facility locations, such as community laboratories, to help more people get reimbursed for their incurred costs.

Canadian Red Cross: A Transitional Care Assistant (TCA) is now available full-time at the Temiskaming Hospital, with dedicated office space. Operating 8:30am-4:30pm, Monday-Friday. A wheel chair accessible vehicle will also be available on-site. For more information, please contact (705) 647-1088 ext. 2812. They are now offering two programs locally:

1. **My Way Home Program:** Provides personalized, short-term assistance with daily tasks such as wellness checks, navigation, meals, transportation, etc..., to help individuals regain independence and ensure a safe and smooth recovery at home. The program runs for 6 weeks and is available to individuals 55+ or adults with physical disabilities who require bundled services. Eligibility for financial assistance with client fees is determined on an individual basis. Referrals to the program can be made by any healthcare professionals, in addition to individuals themselves or their family member. It is recommended to check with the Transitional Care Assistant (TCA) for detailed referral procedures and eligibility criteria. For more details, please refer to the attached poster (My Way Home Poster Doc.) or contact the Transitional Care Assistant (TCA).
2. **Priority Assistance to Transition Home P.A.T.H.:** Provides essential support to individuals returning home after hospitalization. It offers personalized services such as assistance with daily living tasks, transportation, and help with household chores, ensuring a smooth and safe transition. The program aims to improve recovery and well-being by helping individuals regain independence and adjust to home life post-discharge. (Referrals from the hospital only)

January 2025:

Rural Transit Solution Fund: Mark Wilson is looking to establish a Transportation Working Group comprising key individuals familiar with transportation gaps and local transportation needs. The group will explore innovative rural transit solutions aimed at securing federal funding for infrastructure development.

Timiskaming Home Support: The accessible transportation program is currently facing limitations in services and unable to provide full services due to staff shortage (Challenges with recruiting qualified drivers to meet insurance requirements). At this time the accessible transit is only available locally and are not able to accommodate out of town transportation. At this time THS has a surplus, allowing for some flexibility in setting rates, and the discounted rate will fluctuate monthly based on the budget, with the goal of establishing permanent rate reductions.

Non-Urgent Transportation for Medical Appointments Working Group: The working group is facing challenges in accessing data from the travel grants, which is hindering our ability to identify the reasons for seeking healthcare outside the district. The goal is to analyze trends and explore innovative options for a potential grant application, contingent upon obtaining data that support the need to either bringing services closer to home or subsidizing travel costs for medical appointments. We recognize that transportation service for out of town appointments is not available; however, we are facing challenges in obtaining the data that supports the need for it.

Wheels of Hope, Cancer Society: They continue to have difficulty with recruitment of volunteers. Currently there is only 1 volunteer providing this service Temagami-Kirkland Lake. Please spread the word that volunteers are needed. See attached poster (Cancer Society Wheels of Hope Poster Doc.).

IN SUMMARY:

Over the past year, Temiskaming Shores has benefited from improved local transportation services, thanks to a generous donation from the New Liskeard Lions Club for the purchase of an accessible stair climber, new services offered by the Canadian Red Cross, and discounted rates at Timiskaming Home Support with the aim of establishing permanent rate reductions, and two new taxi services (Fast & Courteous and North Taxi).

However, our area still faces challenges in accessing transportation for out-of-town appointments. Due to staff shortages, we no longer have an accessible transit service through Timiskaming Home Support. The Ontario Northland motor coach bus reduced frequency of route north, previously available daily, now available every other day. For out-of-town medical appointments, individuals continue to rely on taxi services, and currently do not have out of town transportation services with an accessible vehicle.

How can you help?

To help address local transportation needs, please consider:





1. **Spread Awareness:** Please forward this email and share information about the local transportation services available (See Transportation Inventory attached), including the discounted rates at Timiskaming Home Support and new services offered by the Canadian Red Cross. Encouraging others to utilize these services can help ensure their sustainability and support more individuals in need.
2. **Advocate for more resources:** Engage with local governments, health organizations, or community groups to advocate for additional funding or resources to improve transportation services, particular for out-of-town medical appointments. Raising awareness of the issue can help bring more attention to the need for better solutions. A reminder that it costs \$900+tax Return (New Liskeard to Sudbury-primary oncology site).
3. **Promote Collaboration:** Encourage partnerships between organizations to find innovative solutions to transportation challenges. This could involve sharing resources or coordinating efforts to provide more accessible transportation options for those in need. Join the working group the Mark Wilson would like to establish for the rural transit solution.
4. **Assist with Data Collection:** Help gather data about local transportation gaps or issues. This could involve surveying individuals about their transportation needs or compiling information about travel patterns to support future grant applications or policy changes aimed at improving services.
5. **Volunteer Recruitment:** Share the Wheels of Hope Poster for volunteer drivers needed. It could help alleviate the strain caused by staff shortages.

By taking any of these actions, recipients can directly contribute to resolving transportation challenges faced by our community.

Thank you for taking the time to review this update on local transportation needs for medical appointments in the Temiskaming Shores and surrounding areas. Wishing you a Happy New Year!!

Tania Osborne

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Transportation Service	Who is eligible?	Service Location & Cost	Transportation for:
Temiskaming District Medical Transportation Services			
<p>Canadian Red Cross 705-647-8121 x3889</p> <p>Monday to Friday 8:30am-4:30pm</p>	<p>My Way Home Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6wk program 55+ or adults with physical disabilities Must need bundled services Clients who require financial support for client fees Eligibility is determined on an individual basis 	<p>Temiskaming District & out of area (No Fee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bundled services: Wellness checks, navigation, transportation (home or medical appointments), meals, etc... 	<p> Medical Community Shopping</p> <p>Accessible Vehicle: Yes</p>
<p>Timiskaming Home Support Services 1-877-318-9678</p> <p>Monday to Friday 8:30am-4:30pm</p>	<p>Accessible Transportation Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment required Eligibility is determined on an individual basis 	<p>Temiskaming District & out of area (Fee varies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call to access services <i>*Temporarily only providing local transportation services (Dec 2024)</i> 	<p> Medical Community Shopping</p> <p>Accessible Vehicle: Yes</p>
<p>Canadian Cancer Society 1-888-939-3333 airdaffodil@cancer.ca</p> <p>Monday to Friday 9:00am-5:00pm</p> <p>www.cancer.ca</p>	<p>Wheels of Hope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed cancer diagnosis Referral required from health care team <p>Air Daffodil (Northern ON)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same criteria as Wheels of Hope in addition: Receiving/ed treatment in the last 12 months 100km travel to receive cancer treatment Must designate and submit a NHTG application 	<p>Temiskaming District & out of area (\$100 annual fee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer ride sharing program, providing rides to and from cancer treatment appointments Helps by arranging flights & ground transportation to a Cancer Centre/ Treatment related appointments Third party provider of transportation with the MOH/NHTG Program 	<p> Medical</p> <p>Accessible Vehicle: No</p> <p><i>**Consider volunteering</i></p>
<p>Métis Nation of Ontario 1-807-276-6993 www.metisnation.org</p> <p>Temiskaming Métis Council 705-672-2807 www.r3metis.com</p>	<p>Aging at home Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizenship card (verified Métis) 55yrs + Phone intake For medication, appointment and running errands. 	<p>Transport clients to and from medical appointments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation arranged by a volunteer or a CSS coordinator. <i>Contact MNO Navigators: 1-800-263-4889 Ext.7</i> 	<p> Medical Community Shopping</p> <p>Accessible Vehicle: Yes</p>


This resource is for information purposes only. Please contact the services listed above for additional information.



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Alternative Non-medical Transportation Services

 www.poparide.com	No specific eligibility criteria	Carpooling/Ride sharing Fee Varies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find a ride on Poparide app or website 	Accessible Vehicle: No
DK Taxi 705-647-7111	No specific eligibility criteria	Temiskaming Shores Fee Varies	Accessible Vehicle: No
Fast & Courteous 705-622-1687 fastandcourteouscourier@gmail.com	Taxi & Delivery Services	Temiskaming Shores, Temagami, and Englehart Fee Varies	 Shopping Accessible Vehicle: Yes
North Taxi 705-650-0786	No specific eligibility criteria	Temiskaming Shores Fee Varies	Accessible Vehicle: No
All-Wright Private Charter 705-650-3327	No specific eligibility criteria	Private Charter Fee Varies	Accessible Vehicle: No
Temiskaming Transit 705-230-2751 Temiskamingshores.ca	No specific eligibility criteria	Temiskaming Shores Public transit system Fee Varies	Accessible Vehicle: No
Ontario Northland ontarionorthland.ca 1-800-461-8558	No specific eligibility criteria	Passenger bus service Fee Varies Purchase bus tickets on their website	Accessible Vehicle: No
Star Luxury Limousine Service 705-474-3433 starsluxurylimousine.com	No specific eligibility criteria	Temiskaming District & out of area Fee Varies sales@starsluxurylimousine.com	Accessible Vehicle: No
CO OP Taxi 705-567-5363	No specific eligibility criteria	Kirkland Lake Fee Varies	Accessible Vehicle: No
A 1 Taxi 705-568-4500	No specific eligibility criteria	Kirkland Lake Fee Varies	Accessible Vehicle: No

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Financial Assistance

<p>Community Cancer Care (CCC) 705-628-8800 14 Armstrong Street North New Liskeard, ON POJ 1P0 ccctemiskaming@gmail.com communitycancerca.ca</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and emotional assistance to residents of Temiskaming Shores and area Confirmed cancer diagnosis In need of financial assistance Travel receipts are required Each situation is assessed on an individual basis 	<p>Reimbursement Varies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial assistance to cancer patients with expenses related to their illness that are not covered by any government or private insurance plans. 	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reimbursement only</p>
<p>Northern Health Travel Grant</p> <p>Ministry of Health 159 Cedar Street 7th Floor Sudbury ON P3E 6A5</p> <p>www.ontario.ca</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident of Northern Ontario Referred within Ontario for specialist health care Have travelled 100km Referred before the travel takes place Submission of a new application for each trip Application received within 12m from date of service 	<p>Financial Assistance to Northern Ontario Residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reimbursement of 41cents/km Submit application by mail or online (Spring 2025) Application can be found online or nearest health care provider or hospital. <p><i>*The Temiskaming Library offers the Gadget Helper Program and can assist with digital literacy for the online travel grant application.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A</p>
<p>Canadian Cancer Society</p> <p>1-888-939-3333 transportation@cancer.ca www.cancer.ca</p> <p>Hospital Attn: Travel Treatment Fund 711 Concession St, Hamilton ON L8V 1C3</p>	<p>Travel Treatment Fund (TTF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently attending cancer treatment Can reapply each year as long as you are still receiving cancer treatment. A financial assessment will be completed to see if you qualify 	<p>Reimbursement Varies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application can be found on their website <p><i>Documents to submit by mail:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel Treatment Fund (TTF) application “VOID” cheque A copy of your notice of Assessment (NOA) 	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A</p>
<p>Additional Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navigation of resources Northern Ontario: www.northeasthealthline.ca Temiskaming Shores Resource Navigation: : 211Ontario.ca <p>**If your finances are a barrier to attend medical appointments contact: Ontario Works, Ontario Disability, Local Service Clubs, Salvation Army, and your MPP</p>		

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