

Community Member Compensation/Reimbursement Policy (Policy)

– Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Policy?

Prior to the release of the Policy, there was no policy to guide Primary Care Networks (PCNs) with respect to compensating or reimbursing expenses for community members who sit on the PCN Board of Directors or Joint Governance Committees.

As part of PCN Evolution, the Alberta Medical Association’s Primary Care Alliance Board released a report in December 2013 entitled *PCN Evolution Vision and Framework*. This report was provided to the Minister of Health as mandated in the Primary Medical Care/Primary Care Networks Consultation Agreement. One of the recommendations in the Report was to recommend adding community representatives to PCN Boards of Directors or Joint Governance Committees as a way of integrating their perspective to help understand community needs and how best to deliver services.

Alberta’s Primary Health Care Strategy also highlights the importance of having communities involved with primary health care. Specifically, Goal 12 of the *Alberta’s Primary Health Care Strategy* states that “*communities and individuals are key players in primary health care system planning and design.*” This translates into having community representation on advisory and governance boards, as primary health care services are based on the needs of the communities.

What is the PCN Board of Directors or Joint Governance Committee?

“PCN Board of Directors” (in legal model 2) and “Joint Governance Committees” (in legal model 1) are the governance structures set up to support the PCN by setting direction, overseeing and making decisions on programs.

Who is a community member?

A “community member” is a member of the community who represents the health interests of that community and is not affiliated with or employed by the PCN. Community members serve on the PCN Board of Directors or Joint Governance Committee in a voluntary capacity.

Why are PCN community members not reimbursed for time attending meetings?

This Policy was developed to align with the not-for-profit industry’s standard of compensation for board and committee members. For example, not-for-profit organizations in Alberta such as hospital foundation boards and community health centre boards do not pay community board and committee members for attending meetings, however, many of these organizations do reimburse members for out-of-pocket expenses associated with attending meetings.

Although PCN community board members will not be reimbursed for attending PCN Board of Director or Joint Governance Committee meetings, they will be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses related to such meetings. This approach is also consistent with current government policies.

Are other board members paid for participating as a PCN Board of Director or a member of a Joint Governance Committee?

Physicians are reimbursed for their time while attending meetings because their participation takes time away from their independent family practice. The Primary Care Initiative Policy (Section 11.4.1) permits PCNs to compensate physicians up to the maximum of the ARP hourly rate for their time in governance and management-related functions of the PCN. The current ARP maximum is \$217.04 per hour.

Alberta Health Services and PCN staff's participation is paid for as part of their employment with Alberta Health Services and PCNs.

What is a reasonable expense?

A reasonable expense is the cost incurred for an item that is essential to the duties of the performance of the PCN Board of Directors or Joint Governance Committee. When claimed, the expense should be able to withstand scrutiny by the Auditor General of Alberta and members of the public; be properly explained and well documented; and be fair and appropriate. Expenses that are eligible for reimbursement include travel, meals and parking. Examples of expenses that are ineligible for reimbursement include the cost of alcohol and the cost of entertainment. Receipts should be provided as proof where possible¹.

How would a community member of the PCN Board of Directors or Joint Governance Committee be reimbursed for reasonable expenses?

A community member of the PCN Board of Directors or Joint Governance Committee will only be reimbursed for reasonable expenses after submission of receipts or evidence of expense (such as travel).

What was the process for developing the Policy?

The Policy was developed by Alberta Health and underwent consultation through the PCN Consultation Committee (PCN CC). The PCN CC was established under the Primary Medical Care/ Primary Care Networks Consultation Agreement between Alberta Health and the Alberta Medical Association to advise on policy and issues relating to PCNs. The PCN CC is accountable to and chaired by Alberta Health and consists of members from the following organizations: Alberta Medical Association, Alberta Health Services and Alberta Health. Final approval of the Policy was granted by the Deputy Minister of Alberta Health on January 11, 2016.

When did the Community Member Compensation and Reimbursement Policy come into effect?

¹ The Government of Alberta's *Travel, Meals and Hospitality Expenses Policy* (Expenses Policy) provides a framework of accountability for the reimbursement of travel, meals and other expenses. Relevant parts of this Expenses Policy are attached and can be used by PCNs as a guideline for setting per diem rates, if they choose. A full copy of this Expenses Policy can be found at <http://www.finance.alberta.ca/business/planning-accountability/accountability/GoA-Travel-Meal-and-Hospitality-Expense-Policy.pdf>.

The Policy came into effect on April 1st, 2016.

PCNs which are currently compensating community members who sit on their PCN Board of Directors or Joint Governance Committee should contact Alberta Health for further direction.

Government of Alberta
Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Policy

The Government of Alberta *Travel, Meals and Hospitality Expenses Policy* provides a framework of accountability for the reimbursement of travel, meals and other expenses. Relevant parts of this Policy are included below and can be used by PCNs as a guideline for setting per diem rates, if they choose.

7. Reimbursement of Travel Expenses and Allowances

Claimable Expenses With a Receipt

- (1) Subject to any requirements set out in sections 8, 9 and 10, a Claimant may claim reimbursement of the following expenses incurred by travelling for Government Business, attending a government sponsored seminar, pre-retirement seminar, or interview selection panel:
 - (a) air fare;
 - (b) automobile rental;
 - (c) rail fare;
 - (d) excess baggage charges where extra equipment is required because of duties being performed;
 - (e) charges for electronic communication related to government business;
 - (f) charges for business related phone calls;
 - (g) inter-municipal bus fares, including airport bus; and
 - (h) internet connectivity in hotels, airplanes or other public places.

Claimable Expenses Without a Receipt

- (2) A Claimant may claim reimbursement for the following expenses incurred by travelling on Government Business, attending a government sponsored seminar, pre-retirement seminar, or interview selection panel, to the maximum amount set out in Appendix “A”:
 - (a) intra-municipal public transportation;
 - (b) taxi or town car, limousine or similar vehicle fares; and
 - (c) parking charges.

8. Expenses and Allowances While Travelling on Government Business

Travel by Air

- (1) An Approver shall only approve economy class air travel, unless otherwise permitted under this section.
- (2) An Approver referenced in section 6(2)(a) or (b) may approve business class air travel:
 - (a) if a medical condition necessitates an upgraded travel class and a supporting physician’s note is provided prior to booking; or
 - (b) for a demonstrated business reason.
- (3) An Approver may only approve business class air travel under subsection (2) in advance of the travel.

Other Travel Routes or Modes of Transportation

- (4) If an Approver has authorized transportation by a Claimant that is not the most direct, practical or cost-effective in the circumstances, the Claimant may claim the lesser of:
- (a) the actual expense of the transportation; or
 - (b) an allowance equivalent to the expense of the most direct, practical and cost-effective route and mode of transportation.

Travel by Third Party Vehicle

- (11) A Claimant may claim reimbursement for the actual expense of hiring or renting third party vehicles. The actual expense shall be the amount shown on the invoice plus a gratuity of up to 20 percent.
- (12) A Claimant may claim the expense of hiring a taxi and may only claim the expense of hiring a town car, limousine or similar vehicle if there is a valid business purpose.
- (13) A Claimant may claim the expense of renting a vehicle if there is a valid business purpose and if the size and type of the vehicle is appropriate for the number of passengers, road conditions, and nature of the need. In-car navigation systems and electronic toll payment (where appropriate) are reimbursable expenses but expenses for all other convenience options are not reimbursable.

Travel by Claimant Vehicle

- (14) Subject to subsection (16), an Approver may authorize one of the following allowances for a given day:
- (a) a vehicle mileage allowance at the rate set out in Appendix "A" if a Claimant uses their private vehicle to travel for Government Business or to attend a pre-retirement seminar.
 - (b) a daily vehicle allowance at the rate set out in Appendix "A" for each day a Claimant's private vehicle is used for Government Business in a given week.
 - (c) an adverse driving condition allowance at the rate set out in Appendix "A" for each day the Claimant's private vehicle is used on Government Business, plus the vehicle mileage allowance under clause (a), when:
 - (i) travel of 10 kilometres or more is on unpaved roads; or
 - (ii) travel is over terrain without roads; or
 - (iii) the vehicle must be frequently stopped and parked (normally 5 or more times), during a single trip in urban areas; or
 - (d) a vehicle mileage allowance at the rate set out in Appendix "A", having regard to the principles set out in section 1(2), if a Claimant uses their private vehicle for Government Business where another means of transport is more appropriate.
- (15) An Approver may approve the travel expenses of a Claimant or an external applicant requested to appear before a selection panel in accordance with this policy, except with respect to mileage expenses incurred in the use of a private vehicle, in which case the rate is as set out in Appendix "A".
- (16) An Approver must not authorize an allowance or a portion of an allowance under subsection (14)(a) or (d) to the extent it relates to travel between the Claimant's residence and office or primary place of work.

Appendix A: Private Vehicle Mileage Allowance - \$0.505 per km travelled

9. Other Expenses and Allowances While Travelling

- (1) Except with respect to reimbursements or allowances claimed under subsections (7) and (8), no Claimant shall be eligible for reimbursement of expenses and allowances under this section unless:
 - (a) the Claimant has been authorized by the deputy head or designate to travel outside of their Work Area for Government Business purposes; and
 - (b) the claim for reimbursement or allowance is solely for those expenses incurred outside the Claimant's Work Area.

Meal Expenses

- (2) When travelling on Government Business, a Claimant may claim either:
 - (a) the actual expense of the meal; or
 - (b) the meal allowance.
- (3) The actual expense of the meal is the amount shown on the bill, excluding alcoholic beverages, plus a gratuity of up to 20 percent.
- (5) When a Claimant is travelling on Government Business for part of a day, the Claimant may be reimbursed for the amount shown on the receipt or paid the meal allowance:
 - (a) for breakfast, if the departure time is 7:30 a.m. or earlier or the return time is 7:30 a.m. or later, or
 - (b) for lunch, if the departure time is 1:00 p.m. or earlier or the return time is 1:00 p.m. or later, or
 - (c) for dinner, if the departure time is 6:30 p.m. or earlier or the return time is 6:30 p.m. or later.
- (6) A Claimant must not claim a meal allowance if a meal is provided at no cost, unless the Claimant declines the meal because of a demonstrated:
 - (a) dietary restriction; or
 - (b) business reason.
- (7) If a meal is included in the expense of airfare, a Claimant cannot claim a meal allowance unless the flight is delayed. When the flight is delayed, a meal may be claimed in accordance with subsections (1) through (4).
- (8) If a Claimant and spouse or benefit partner attends a government sponsored pre-retirement seminar, the Claimant may claim the spouse's or benefit partner's meals in accordance with this policy.

Appendix A: Meal Expense - allowance without a receipt

Breakfast - \$9.20

Lunch - \$11.60

Dinner - \$20.75

Accommodation Expenses

- (9) When a Claimant is travelling on Government Business or attending a government sponsored pre-retirement seminar, and overnight accommodation away from the

Claimant's residence is necessary, the actual expense of accommodation or an allowance at the rate set out in Appendix "A" per night may be claimed.

Appendix A: Accommodation - allowance without receipt \$20.15