

Dear Patients of the Nottawasaga Family Health Centre,

We strive to deliver medical services effectively and efficiently so that you can have access to a high standard of medical care. As the costs of health care continue to rise, there are an increasing number of medical services that are not covered by OHIP. These are referred to as “Uninsured Services”. Any provision of a medical service without an appointment would be considered an uninsured service. In other words, anytime we perform a medical service for our patients without an appointment, we receive no financial compensation from the ministry for this.

Up to this point, we have been providing uninsured services such as giving medical advice, specialist referrals, ordering of testing and prescription refills (all other than during an appointment) free of charge to our patients. We have also connected with patients by email, and by our portal. We believe that we have been successful in providing a convenient option for us to communicate. Unfortunately, OHIP neither funds financial investment for these services, nor does it fund staff wages. These services require both financial investment and staff time to process the hundreds of requests per day. Our physicians typically spend at least 30% of our day providing these services without any financial compensation.

Unfortunately, due to restrictions implemented by the Ministry of Health, rising staff costs, and the limitations that these services place on physician availability, we are no longer able to continue provide these services completely free of charge. Therefore, the payment of these uninsured services will now become the responsibility of the patient, or to any organization that is requesting the service.

We have recently added telephone appointments as an uninsured service due to the ministry removing funding for this. We have so far been billing these and other uninsured services on a fee-for-service basis only.

We have recently received feedback from our patients who are now dependent upon telephone appointments due to difficulty in mobilizing from their homes, or who live at greater distances. They have had concerns with being able to pay repetitive \$30 fees for telephone appointments. We have also had patients who require numerous uninsured medical documentation items per year share their concerns about the rising costs of providing these services on a fee-for-service basis. For these reasons, we have decided to offer our patients the option of being able to pay for these services as a block fee, rather than on a fee-for-service basis if it better suits them *effective April 1, 2023*.

This letter is intended to clarify your options for the payment of fees for any uninsured services that you may require. If you wish to access these services, you may choose from a number of payment options:

Option 1: Annual Block fee – each covers services for a full year and includes HST

● **Communication package**- Covers prescription renewals by telephone or fax, arranging of testing or specialist referrals without appointment, and medical advice given electronically by physician or nurse. Also covers telephone appointments by physician at 50% discount- \$80.

* Note that all electronic communications with our staff that relate to administrative issues such as appointment scheduling etc. will still be offered **free of charge**. *

● **Documentation package**-covers 100% of minor forms such as sick/return to work or school notes, notes for insurance coverage for massage therapy, physical therapy, chiropractic, orthotics etc. It will also provide a 50% discount for most of the more detailed forms- \$80.

*Please see our list of uninsured services to determine specific coverage details for each type of form. *

● **Comprehensive package** -covers all services in both the communication package and the documentation package- \$140.

Option 2: Fee for service - Individual billing for each uninsured service, paid for at the time the service is provided.

Both plans are fully supported by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and details can be found online:

(<http://www.cpso.on.ca/policiespublications/policy/blockfeesanduninsuredservices>).

Please see the attached list for an outline of what the individual fees are, as well as what the block fee covers. If these fees will cause you any financial difficulty, please discuss it with our administrative staff. Choosing not to pay the annual fee will not affect your access to insured appointment-based services in any way. Most of our physician services are still offered for free, if the request is made during an appointment.

Every effort has been made to include the most requested services in this information sheet. If the service you are requesting is not listed, please ask us for further clarification. The fees listed are based on the Ontario Medical Associations Physician's Guide to Uninsured Services.

Wishing you and your families all the best.

Sincerely,
Nottawasaga Family Health Centre