

INDIVIDUAL PHYSICIAN RURAL CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION POLICY

The Rural Continuing Medical Education (RCME) benefits provide funding for medical education activities to support the maintenance of those medical skills and credentials required for rural practice. These benefits are in addition to the CME entitlement provided for in the Working Agreement between the Government and British Columbia Medical Association (BCMA) (administered through BCMA).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A resident 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 RCME funding. Funding amounts are based on the degree of isolation of his/her community as determined by the Joint Standing Committee (JSC). Physicians are entitled to RCME funds once they complete their residency requirements of nine (9) months out of a calendar year. Please review the Ministry of Health's RCME Policy for complete details.

Communities	Up to 2 years	In the 3 & 4 year	Over 4 years
'A' Communities: General Practice	\$1,320	\$3,520	\$5,720
'B' Communities: General Practice	\$440	\$2,640	\$4,840
'C' Communities: General Practice	\$0	\$2,200	\$4,400
'D' Communities: General Practice	\$0	\$1,100	\$2,200
'A' Communities: Specialists	\$1,800	\$4,800	\$7,800
'B' Communities: Specialists	\$600	\$3,600	\$6,600
'C' Communities: Specialists	\$0	\$3,000	\$6,000
'D' Communities: Specialists	\$0	\$1,500	\$3,000

RELOCATING BETWEEN RSA ELIGIBLE COMMUNITIES

Moving to Eligible Communities

A physician who qualifies for RCME and moves to another community covered by the RSA continues to get credit for the time in the previous community, but will receive the RCME amount based on the rates for the new community. A physician can request unspent/banked RCME funds be transferred to another HA when relocating to another community covered by the RSA.

Moving to In-eligible Communities

A physician who qualifies for RCME and who does not stay in a community covered by this Agreement for the entire twelve (12) months is eligible for a proportionate amount of the sum set out in Policy Section 2. If the physician uses the entire sum and subsequently leaves before the end of the twelve (12) month period, any overpayment is owed to the HA.

RETIRING FROM REGULAR PRACTICE

When a physician retires from regular practice, he/she can use their accumulated RCME funds for up to three (3) years from their date of retirement, if their intent is to provide locum services in rural areas, while maintaining residency in British Columbia. After the three (3) year period, any unspent funds will revert back to the community RCME program.

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 to the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues (JSC) for review as an exceptional circumstance.

RCME BANK

A physician may bank RCME for up to three (3) years; however, eligibility for RCME for any year expires at the end of two (2) subsequent years. 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 the Health Authority to be used for that Rural Community RCME fund.

REVERTED FUNDS

The Health Authority must use any RCME reverting to it in consultation and agreement with the Local Area Medical Advisory Committee for CME purposes.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Physicians who have submitted claims that are considered ineligible under the criteria below are able to appeal those decisions to HA Medical Advisory Committee. Such appeals will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A final appeal may be submitted to the JSC for consideration.

REIMBURSEMENT CRITERIA

- Claims may only be made **AFTER** attendance at a CME event.
- Certificates of Attendance and Proof of CME credit hours **MUST** be submitted for each CME event.
- Minimum **3.5 credit hours daily** average for each education day is required for reimbursement.
- The claim total may be adjusted to comply with the RCME reimbursement policy.
- If using 'Frequent Flyer' type points, only actual fees paid will be reimbursed.
- Photocopies of original receipts will be accepted only if original receipts are needed for subsidiary reimbursement from another source of items not fully covered by this program (including but not limited to Canada Revenue Agency, BCMA, etc.) Applicants shall sign a guarantee that multiple sources will not be used to reimburse the same expenses.
- Social activities included in the cost of the registration will not be reimbursed.

Accredited Courses and Conferences

Medical conferences, symposia, courses, or society meetings that are sponsored or co-sponsored by a recognized medical education body (i.e. university, hospital, provincial/state/local medical society or association) and where there has been physician involvement in the planning/facilitating/presenting and that are directed towards a medical and/or health care provider audience are eligible for reimbursement.

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, Conference and Informal Training Programs

Claims for non-accredited courses, conferences and informal training programs must be accompanied by a statement of education objectives for the learning event and be **PRE APPROVED** by signature of the designated authorized Medical Health Leader. Physicians whose applications are rejected may appeal to the area Medical Director or HA Vice-President of Medicine.

Reasonable Travel Days

Reimbursement is available for reasonable travel days to and from the CME event from the physician's home community. If the CME event is part of a longer holiday, the travel days and expenses will be calculated as though they occurred just before and after the CME event using the most expedient and cost effective method of travel.

Course Fees

- **REQUIRED:** Certificate of Attendance, number of study credits earned & registration receipt
- Reimbursed at 100% less social activities
- Membership dues are not reimbursed (unless dues plus course fee are less than non-member registration fees)
- Courses or events aboard cruise ships must have the registration fee separated from the overall cruise package price and it must be comparable to a land-based event - Accommodation expense may be claimed against the cruise price

Air Travel

- **REQUIRED:** Airline receipts with flight costs per person indicated
- Reimbursed at 100%

Mileage

- **REQUIRED:** Mileage calculation between the community of residence and the learning opportunity
- Gas and/or repair receipts are not accepted
- Local transportation (i.e., 25 kilometers or less round trip) will not be reimbursed

Car Rental/Taxi/Parking

- **REQUIRED:** Car rental receipt, parking receipts, taxi receipts, fuel receipts
- Reimbursed at 100% during dates of conference
- Car rental fuel receipts are reimbursed at 100%

Accommodation

- **REQUIRED:** Itemized hotel receipts indicating applicable room costs and taxes
- Accommodation expenses for local courses/conferences within 25 kilometers are not reimbursed
- Accommodation for courses or events aboard cruise ships will be averaged based on a minimum of 3.5 credit hours daily for each education day

Meals and Miscellaneous Sundry

- Able to be prorated into half days
- No receipts required

Practice Overhead

- Able to be prorated into half days
- No receipts required

Electronic Equipment Purchases *(for CME purposes ONLY)*

- **REQUIRED:** Itemized receipt
- Reimbursed at 100%
- Purchased for the educational use of an individual physician
- Can include: computers, digital cameras, smart phones, tablets, and camcorders
- Multiple computers, and items purchased for office administration purposes are not eligible for reimbursement (e.g. office networks, fax/copiers, billing station, EMR, etc)

Internet Access Fees *(for CME purposes ONLY)*

- **REQUIRED:** Two (2) internet fee statements – one (1) from the beginning and one (1) from the end of the year being claimed, plus any months in which a rate change occurs
- Reimbursed at 100% (include receipt for any month a rate change was made)

Medical Education Materials *(Medical Texts/Journals/Audio Visual CME/Practice Based Small Group Learning/Small Group Learning Modules)*

- **REQUIRED:** receipts with item description, date and amount paid
- Reimbursed at 100%
- Membership/Association fees, as well as costs for journals that are benefits of membership are not eligible for reimbursement
- CME distance 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

CME Software/Online CME Subscriptions *(for CME purposes)*

- **REQUIRED:** itemized receipts
- Reimbursed at 100%
- Software used for creating CME is acceptable (ie PowerPoint, Word)
- Software for office functions (ie EMR, billing) will not be reimbursed

Library Donations

- Donations of up to \$100 will be reimbursed at 100%

REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS

Please refer to Appendix A for more information on reimbursable CME amounts.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURE

- Complete and sign the Rural Continuing Medical Education Reimbursement Form.
- Include copies of itemized receipts.
- Send claim and supporting documents via one of the following methods:
 - a) Scan and email to: physician.education@northernhealth.ca
 - b) Fax to: 250-645-6336
 - c) Mail to: Suite 404 – 299 Victoria Street, Prince George, BC, V2L 5B8
- Upon receiving the completed application package, the application will be reviewed to ensure it falls within allocation limits and available funds.

APPENDIX A: REIMBURSABLE AMOUNTS

Mileage:

- Reimbursed at current provincial rates (\$0.52 per kilometer) up to the cost of an economy airfare plus relevant ground transportation

Accommodation:

- Hotel: \$400/night maximum
- Private residence: \$80/night

Meals & Miscellaneous Sundry Expenses:

- \$95.00 per day

Overhead:

- Private Practice: \$300/day for each full office day missed
- ER, APP, Anesthesia, etc.: \$180/day for each day full day missed