

Notice to Physicians

Surgical Access Premium Payments

Effective August 1, 2023, the interim Surgical Access Premium Payment initiative (SAI) will facilitate more evening and weekend surgeries at NSH/IWK facilities to address surgical waitlist/backlog for Nova Scotians. Net new surgeries by NSH/IWK as part of the Surgical Waitlist Reduction Initiative will be eligible for premium payments for all cases scheduled and started in defined premium times.

Approved surgeries will be identified by Nova Scotia Health, where the following criteria must be met:

- Cases and/or lists (“cases”) scheduled in off-hours or weekends cannot be cases purposely bumped from “regular hours” for a specific site and/or operating room.
 - Surgeons and Anesthesiologists scheduled for off-hours or weekend cases cannot be on-call and will not be eligible for Surgical Access Premium Payment, outside of emergency cases.
 - Scheduled cases must result in demonstrable *additional* surgical activity within a given timeframe to be eligible for Surgical Access Premium Payment.
 - Where surgical services are regularly scheduled outside the 0800-1700 window (e.g., 0730 start time), only those cases which meet the criteria of “in addition to normal surgical activity” will be eligible for Surgical Access Premium Payment.
- The existing premium fees’ structure will apply to scheduled surgical cases meeting the above criteria.
 - 35% for all cases started between 1700-2359 on weekdays; or from 0800-1659 on Saturdays.
 - 50% for all cases started between 0000-0759 on weekdays or from 1700-0759 on Saturdays, or for any cases started anytime on Sundays or holidays.
 - Surgical Access Premium Payment will not be eligible for:
 - Additional cases that start in non-premium time; or
 - Regularly scheduled cases that go into premium time.

The NSH/IWK will be developing, on a monthly basis, the list of approved surgeries, to which eligible premiums will be applied. Premium payments for this program will only be issued if claims are submitted within the standard 90-day billing window.

Physicians are to submit these surgical claims **without** adding any premium modifiers. After a post-payment review, the appropriate premium of 35% or 50%, will be calculated on the value of the paid health service code(s) submitted and premium payments will be issued as a lump sum amount through a bottom-line adjustment after the reconciliation period.

- Alternate Payment Plan and Alternate Funding Plan physicians will be eligible for additional payment, above and beyond their regular APP/AFP payment for all surgeries performed that meet the above criteria.
 - AFP physicians must shadow bill the claims associated with the SAI to the new defined group business arrangement (BA) and will receive full payment for surgeries performed based on the health service code(s) adjudicated and paid (FFS rates plus premiums) to the defined group BA after a period of reconciliation.
 - APP physicians will submit the health service codes associated with the SAI on their FFS BA and receive the applicable payment once the claim is adjudicated, and subsequently will receive the premium amount to their CMPA BA after a reconciliation period.
 - Fee for Service physicians will submit the health service codes associated with the SAI as per normal process and receive the applicable payment once the claim is adjudicated, and subsequently will receive the premium amount to their CMPA BA after a reconciliation period.

For eligibility questions, please contact Nova Scotia Health or IWK.

- NSH: Medical Affairs – PhysicianContracts@nshealth.ca
- IWK: LeeAnn Larocque, Executive Lead, Clinical Transformation – Leeann.Larocque@iwk.nshealth.ca

*Please note that Premium Guidelines as outlined in the Physician's Manual must still be followed for all premium billing outside of this initiative.