

OPTOMETRY BULLETIN

July 29, 2024

The Department of Health and Wellness would like to advise you of the following Optometry Tariff Agreement Modifications effective August 1, 2024:

Tariff Changes

The new tariff agreement negotiated by the Department of Health and Wellness and the Nova Scotia Association of Optometrists specified an increase to the value of the Medical Service Unit (MSU) effective:

- April 1, 2022, the optometry MSU increased to \$3.19
- April 1, 2023, the optometry MSU increased to \$3.32
- April 1, 2024, the optometry MSU increased to \$3.42
- April 1, 2025, the optometry MSU will increase to \$3.52

MSI will begin paying service encounters using the April 1, 2024, MSU value for service encounters with a date of service July 19, 2024, onward. There will be 1 lump sum retro payment for services provided 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 and is anticipated to be issued August 2024. Due to the 90-day period allowed for claim submission, a second retroactive payment will be calculated once the 90-day submission window has elapsed to include all optometric services performed on dates of service April 1, 2024 - July 18, 2024. This retro payment is anticipated to be issued in November 2024. The retroactive payments will show as a positive bottom-line adjustment on your payment statements.

Program Changes

The items set out in this article 4 shall be effective on and after 1 August 2024.

Eligibility for the visual field service (09.26B), will be expanded to include the following codes:

237.71 Neurofibromatosis Type 1	36846 Homonymous bilat field defects
36250 Macular Degeneration Unspecified	3689 Unspecified Visual Disturbance
36252 Exudative Senile Macular Degen	3699 Unspecified Visual Loss
36813 Visual discomfort (Photophobia)	37700 Papilledema unspecified
36814 Visual distortions shape/size (metamorphopsia)	37710 Optic atrophy unspecified
3682 Diplopia	37721 Drusen of optic disc
36840 Visual field defect unspecified	37730 Optic neuritis unspecified
36844 Oth localized vis field defect	7100 Systemic lupus erythematosus
	7140 Rheumatoid arthritis

The MSU value for 09.02C will be increased from 20.48 to 23.58.

A “Complex Patient” means a patient who presents with at least two of the following conditions, as indicated by diagnostic codes submitted with the claim:

3669	existing cataracts
36250	age-related macular degeneration
36201	diabetic retinopathy
3659	glaucoma
3643 or 74346	uveitis

For a complex patient as defined above under the age of 65 years, the MSU value for a comprehensive eye exam (09.02C) shall be increased by 11 over the MSU value set out in Schedule A, provided the optometrist adds the applicable modifier(s) as specified in the Optometrist Guide. (PT=CMPX 34.58)

For a complex patient as defined above aged 65 years or older, the MSU value for a comprehensive eye exam (09.02C) shall be increased by 14 over the MSU value set out in Schedule A, provided the optometrist adds the applicable modifier(s) as specified in the Optometrists Guide. (PT=CMPX, AG=OV65 37.58)

The MSU value for all CCDX limited eye exams (RO=CCDX) provided to patients aged 65 years or older will be increased by 3, provided the optometrist adds the applicable modifier(s) as specified in the Optometrist Guide.

(RO=CCDX, AG=OV65 14)

(RO=CCDX, RP=INTL, AG=OV65 17)

(RO=CCDX, PT=PRTO, AG=OV65 17)

(RO=CCDX, PT=PRBK, AG=OV65 17)

The eligible frequency for visual field testing for glaucoma management (09.26B RO=GLAU) when clinically indicated shall increase to four per year. Documentation of clinical indications must be present in the patient's health record.

New Optometrists Guide published

The Department of Health and Wellness has published a new 2024 Optometrists Guide for optometry programs under Medical Services Insurance (MSI) coverage, effective August 1, 2024. The Guide includes substantive changes since the last version published in 2018. As a reference for updates see 2018 Optometrists Guide.

Amendments to the Health Services Insurance Act proclaimed into force on April 09, 2024, gave the Minister of Health and Wellness the authority to establish the tariff of fees for insured optometric services outside of Regulations. The Guide will now be the sole source reference for the optometry tariff following repeal of the Insured Optometric Services Regulations and Tariff of Fees for Insured Optometric Services, which will occur effective August 01, 2024.

Other updates to the Guide include, but are not limited to, content pertaining to the 2019 and 2024 tariff agreements, and other content previously communicated through bulletins.