
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

B.C. WAIVES MSP WAITING PERIOD FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

VICTORIA – British Columbia has waived the waiting period for Medical Services Plan coverage for Canadian military families moving to B.C. from overseas, Health Minister George Abbott announced today.

“We recognize the sacrifices our military personnel and their families make in going overseas for a tour of duty,” said Abbott. “We fully support our troops and we are pleased to waive the waiting period and provide immediate and full medical coverage for these families in order to make their move to B.C. as smooth as possible.”

The majority of Canadian military families moving to British Columbia from an overseas assignment are already fully covered by their federal group medical insurance plan during the waiting period. However, waiving the wait period for Medical Services Plan (MSP) coverage will alleviate any need for families to pay up front for medical care and wait for reimbursement by their insurance provider.

“Hundreds of military families throughout British Columbia, including those on south Vancouver Island, will benefit immediately from government’s new policy,” said Saanich North and the Islands MLA Murray Coell. “Waiving the waiting period for MSP coverage is something less for them to worry about.”

Ordinarily, MSP wait periods are in place for any new resident of British Columbia. People moving from within Canada are typically covered by their originating province or territory during that period. The wait period for MSP coverage consists of the balance of the month in which residence is established, plus two full months. This wait period has been established to protect the health-care system from paying the cost of health services for individuals who may come to B.C. to access health care without establishing permanent residence in this province.

“Returning to Canada after an overseas posting can involve a huge adjustment for military families,” said Gaynor Jackson, executive director of the Esquimalt Military Family Resource Centre. “It is great news that these families will not have to worry about covering their medical costs once they move to this province.”

Canadian military personnel are advised to contact their human resources department for information about the appropriate group application form to initiate Medical Services Plan coverage.

The public can obtain more information on MSP, including applications forms for enrolment, online at www.health.gov.bc.ca/insurance/ or by calling Health Insurance BC at 604-683-7151 in Vancouver or toll free in other areas of the province at 1-800-663-7100.

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