



DEC 05 2016

MR. CORY VANTHUYNE
MLA, YELLOWKNIFE NORTH

Oral Question 465-18(2): Extended Health Benefits Coverage for Progressive and Tri-Focal Lenses

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on November 4th, 2016 regarding Extended Health Benefits coverage for progressive and tri-focal lenses.

As I mentioned in the House, currently progressive and tri-focal lenses are not covered under the GNWT Extended Health Benefits programs. In order to ensure consistent coverage, the GNWT Extended Health Benefits Programs mirror the benefits offered through the Federal Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program. Under the Federal NIHB program certain items are classified as Exclusions. Exclusions are goods and services which will not be covered under the NIHB program under any circumstances and are not subject to the NIHB appeal process. Progressive or trifocal lenses are Exclusions under the NIHB Vision Care Benefit List, which means they are also excluded under the GNWT Extended Health Benefits programs.

Department of Health and Social Services officials are currently in discussions with the Federal Government as part of the ongoing renewal process of the NIHB agreement. I have directed officials within the Department to raise the issue of including progressive or trifocal lenses in these discussions with Health Canada. We are in the early stages of these discussions and I hope to have a response to our request to modernize the formulary for eyeglasses to

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include progressive and tri-focal lenses in the near future. We want to be able to provide residents with coverage for the most appropriate lenses and eyewear to meet their needs, and I hope that soon this will also apply to progressive and tri-focal lenses.

Thank you.



Glen Abernethy
Minister of Health and Social Services

c. Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator, Executive