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TO: ALL PHYSICIANS AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS

RE: Tuberculosis Diagnostic and Treatment Services for Uninsured Persons (TB-UP) Program

Dear Doctor:

I am writing to advise you of the introduction of the Tuberculosis Diagnostic and Treatment Services for Uninsured Persons (TB-UP) Program. The purpose of this public health program is to reduce the public health risk of transmission of tuberculosis (TB) from uninsured persons to other Ontario residents. The TB-UP program will ensure that all persons in Ontario (regardless of medical insurance coverage) have access to diagnostic and treatment services for TB disease or infection.

The TB-UP program consists of processing payments to physicians, laboratories and radiology service providers for **out-patient** services provided to uninsured individuals who require assessment and/or treatment for active/suspect TB, or who are at high risk of developing TB (e.g., contacts of infectious TB). This program will eliminate the financial barrier for uninsured persons in Ontario, so that all persons with active/suspect TB can access early diagnostic and treatment services as required.

Access to the TB-UP Program:

The TB-UP program can be accessed through the local public health unit. Patients may contact the health unit directly, or be referred through a physician or service agency. To be eligible for registration in the TB-UP program, the patient must not have medical insurance coverage for TB services. In addition, the patient must be one of the following:

- suspect/active TB case;
- contact of an active TB case; or
- a person at high risk of developing active TB.

In general, eligible patients should contact the health unit directly during regular business hours for registration in the TB-UP program. Under exceptional circumstances, eligible patients may be registered while in the physician's office or hospital out-patient clinic. The attending physician can call the health unit to determine if the patient would be eligible for coverage under the TB-UP program.

Registration into the TB-UP Program:

In order to obtain coverage under the TB-UP program, eligible clients must first apply for coverage under the TB-UP program and sign a *TB-UP Application and Consent* form. By signing this form the client provides consent for the sharing of information among health units, service providers and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. In general, the *TB-UP Application and Consent* form should be signed at the health unit during registration. However, under exceptional circumstances the patient can sign while in the physician's office or hospital clinic. Once the patient has signed the *TB-UP Application and Consent* form, the health unit can register the patient in the TB-UP program and assign a TB-UP registration number. This registration number verifies that the patient is enrolled in the TB-UP program.

Health Care Provider Claim Forms for payment under the TB-UP program:

The local health unit will provide the necessary *Health Care Provider Claim* form package either to the attending physician or to the eligible patient to take to their physician. The health unit must ensure the patient's TB-UP registration number is included on all *Health Care Provider Claim* forms prior to issuing the claim forms.

The package of *Health Care Provider Claim* forms will contain the following:

- 3 *Health Care Provider Claim* forms to bill for physician services (2 to cover first and second/follow up visit with attending physician and 1 to cover radiologist services);
- 3 *Health Care Provider Claim* forms to bill for laboratory services (because a separate claim form must be submitted for each date of service, these may be required if specimens are obtained and tested on different days); and
- 1 *Health Care Provider Claim* form for the radiology facility.

The attending physician will keep 2 *Health Care Provider Claim* forms and give the remaining *Health Care Provider Claim* forms to the patient to provide to the laboratory and radiology service providers as required. Service providers who see TB-UP patients and provide out-patient TB related services can bill for these services by submitting the completed *Health Care Provider Claim* forms to the Registration and Claims Branch of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for payment under the TB-UP program. Submission instructions can be found on the *Health Care Provider Claim Form – Provider Instruction* sheet.

Registration and Claims Branch of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:

The Registration and Claims Branch (RCB) will act as the claims payment-processing agent for the TB-UP program. Laboratories, radiology clinics and physicians (including radiologists) must submit the *Health Care Provider Claim* forms to the RCB for reimbursement of TB diagnostic and/or treatment services rendered to TB-UP clients.

Claims will be processed by the RCB through a manual alternate reimbursement method that is completely separate from the OHIP system. Services provided will be paid at the same rate as the Schedule of Benefits fee value for the same service provided to an insured person. The payments for services rendered under the TB-UP program will not affect any utilization discounts or thresholds that may apply to OHIP billings.

NOTE: The TB-UP program will cover TB services provided by physicians or other service providers (i.e., laboratories or radiology facilities) who are paid on a fee-for-service basis for

providing these services. For more information regarding eligible service providers for payment under the TB-UP program please see attached Questions and Answers.

In-patient and out-patient services covered under the TB-UP program:

In general, the TB-UP program will cover only out-patient services for non-hospitalized patients. For more information regarding eligible services please see attached Questions and Answers.

Questions about the TB-UP program:

The TB-UP Questions and Answers is available on the Ontario Medical Association website: Should you or your staff have any questions about the TB-UP program please contact the local public unit in your area.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara H. Kawa MD DPH
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Vaccine Preventable Disease and TB Control Unit
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Encl.