

# Northern Ontario Residents Streamlined Training and Reimbursement Program (NORSTAR)

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## Frequently Asked Questions

Answers below apply to all NORSTAR program streams: Postgraduate Elective Learners, Faculty-Resident Dyads, and Restricted Registration.

### 1. Which resident/fellow electives and assignments are eligible for expense reimbursement through NORSTAR and how do I apply?

#### **POSTGRADUATE ELECTIVE LEARNERS:**

Medical residents/fellows from Canadian medical schools are eligible for travel and accommodation expense reimbursement through NORSTAR's Postgraduate Elective Learners stream when the following conditions are met:

- They have completed an educational elective booked through NOSM U's online portal. More details can be found on [NOSM U's website](#).
- The location of the elective is within the North West or North East Ontario Health Region. You can check the specific areas included by viewing [a detailed map of Ontario Health Regions](#).

At the beginning of each month, NOSM U provides NORSTAR with a list of all the eligible electives that have been completed in the preceding month.

#### **FACULTY-RESIDENT DYADS:**

Medical residents/fellows from Canadian medical schools are eligible for travel and accommodation expense reimbursement through NORSTAR's Faculty-Resident Dyad stream when the following conditions are met:

- They are accompanying a physician on locum or other work assignment in the North West or North East Ontario Health Region. You can check the specific areas included by viewing [a detailed map of Ontario Health Regions](#).
- The faculty physician they accompany must have a faculty appointment with the medical resident/fellow's home educational institution.

Before the start date, host communities are required to submit a NORSTAR Community/Hospital Request Form for all Faculty-Resident Dyad assignments to take place in that calendar month. NORSTAR will then confirm approval of these assignments with the community directly. It is recommended that both faculty physicians and residents/fellows work directly with the community on scheduling and confirming approval well in advance of the assignment start date (NORSTAR approval can take up to two weeks).

### **RESTRICTED REGISTRATION:**

Medical residents/fellows from Canadian medical schools certified through PARO's Restricted Registration Program are eligible for travel and accommodation expense reimbursement through NORSTAR's Restricted Registration stream when completing clinical services in the North West and North East Ontario Health Regions. You can check the specific areas included by viewing [a detailed map of Ontario Health Regions](#).

Before the start date, host communities are required to submit a NORSTAR Community/Hospital Request Form for all Restricted Registration assignments to take place in that calendar month. NORSTAR will then confirm approval of these assignments with the communities directly. It is recommended that residents/fellows work directly with communities on scheduling and confirming approval well in advance of the assignment start dates (NORSTAR approval can take up to two weeks).

### **ALL PROGRAM STREAMS:**

All residents, fellows, and/or faculty physicians participating in any of the three NORSTAR streams must hold appropriate registration with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) and ensure compliance with relevant hospital credentialing requirements.

Medical residents/fellows that have completed an approved elective/assignment through one of the three NORSTAR program streams described above can then submit a completed NORSTAR Physician Expense Claim Form (with receipts and any supporting documentation) to [norstar@ontariohealth.ca](mailto:norstar@ontariohealth.ca).

## **2. In which communities is expense reimbursement through NORSTAR eligible?**

Only electives/assignments located in the Northern Ontario Health Regions are eligible for expense reimbursement through NORSTAR. Ontario Health has two Northern Regions:

- The North West includes communities from Manitouwadge in the east, to Kenora and the Manitoba border in the west, and the Hudson Bay Coast to the north.
- The North East includes communities from Wawa to the west, Parry Sound to the south, Mattawa to the east, and the James Bay Coast to the north.

Residents/fellows can verify if a community is eligible for NORSTAR expense reimbursement by:

- Looking at a [detailed map of Ontario Health Regions](#)
- Contacting NORSTAR directly via email at [norstar@ontariohealth.ca](mailto:norstar@ontariohealth.ca)

Please be aware that the communities of Huntsville, Bracebridge, and Gravenhurst **are not** located in the North East or North West Ontario Health regions.

### 3. When am I eligible to travel to/from my resident assignment?

Residents/fellows can claim expenses in the community up to one day before and one day after an eligible assignment. Any additional expenses incurred related to a longer stay in the community will be prorated. Residents choosing to stay in the community on their own expense, before or after an assignment, can still receive reimbursement for their airfare or mileage to/from the community so long as the travel is within one week of the assignment start or end date. However, additional costs such as additional days of car rental, accommodations, fuel charges, and in-community mileage will not be reimbursed.

### 4. What are the minimum requirements on receipts for reimbursement?

To be eligible for reimbursement, electronic receipts must meet the following requirements:

- Be issued in the physician's name, if applicable.
- Include an itemized breakdown of all charges and fees.
- Show proof of payment, date of service, and vendor information.
- Be submitted with a completed Physician Expense Claim Form.

Please note: a booking confirmation email (i.e., airfare or accommodation) that does not include proof of payment (i.e., total amount paid, payment method, etc.) is not considered a valid receipt. Residents/fellows must obtain a complete receipt with all required information from the vendor in order to submit for reimbursement.

### 5. What accommodations are eligible for reimbursement?

Residents/fellows can claim accommodation expenses during their elective/assignment for a single occupancy, standard room in publicly available registered business. Expenses will be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$150 per night before taxes.

Accommodations receipts must meet the following requirements for reimbursement:

- Be in the physician's name.
- Show an itemized breakdown of all charges and fees, including the nightly rate.
- Include proof of payment, date of service, and vendor contact information.
- Show the vendor's registered business number.

Airbnb accommodations are eligible for expense reimbursement. Please note, however, that additional charges (cleaning fees, processing fees, etc.) will count toward the daily rate. If any additional charges, once counted toward the daily rate, exceed the maximum \$150/night, the expenses will be prorated.

Private stays with family, friends, or colleagues are encouraged. Residents/fellows will be reimbursed \$30 per night. No receipt is required. Residents/fellows are required to list the dates associated with any gratuitous lodging claims in the comments section on the NORSTAR Physician Expense Claim Form.

## 6. What is the maximum rate for airfare reimbursement within the province of Ontario?

While there is no maximum airfare for travel within the province, only economy class airfare from a physician's home or base to the community is eligible for reimbursement. Residents/fellows who choose to fly at a higher-class rate must provide a quote for the economy class equivalent for the same flight, showing the same dates and times.

Eligible and ineligible fare classes for reimbursement are listed below for several different airlines. For any questions about fares or alternate airlines, please contact [norstar@ontariohealth.ca](mailto:norstar@ontariohealth.ca) before booking.

Transport Company	Eligible Fare Classes	Ineligible Fare Classes
Air Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic</li> <li>Standard</li> <li>Flex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comfort</li> <li>Latitude</li> <li>Premium Economy</li> <li>Business Class</li> </ul>
AirCreebec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economy Saver</li> <li>Economy Flex</li> </ul>	<i>Not applicable</i>
American Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic Economy</li> <li>Main Cabin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Premium Economy</li> <li>Business</li> <li>First</li> </ul>
Bearskin Airlines/ Perimeter Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fixed</li> <li>Flex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plus</li> <li>Freedom</li> </ul>
Delta Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic Economy</li> <li>Main Cabin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delta Comfort</li> <li>Delta Premium Select</li> <li>Delta One</li> <li>First Class</li> </ul>
Flair Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bare Bundle</li> <li>Basic Bundle</li> <li>Big Bundle</li> </ul>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Porter Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic</li> <li>Standard</li> <li>Flex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom</li> <li>Porter Reserve (Navigate or Ultimate)</li> </ul>
Thunder Air	<i>No fare class distinction</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Via Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Escape</li> <li>Economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economy Plus</li> <li>Business</li> <li>Business Class</li> </ul>
United Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic Economy</li> <li>Economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economy Plus</li> <li>Premium Economy</li> <li>United First</li> <li>United Polaris</li> </ul>
WestJet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ultra Basic</li> <li>Econo</li> <li>Econo Flex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Premium</li> <li>Premium Flex</li> <li>Business</li> <li>Business Flex</li> </ul>

## **7. What is the maximum rate for out-of-province airfare?**

Physicians with a home or base outside of Ontario are eligible to claim a maximum of \$1,500 (including taxes) for out-of-province economy class return flights. One-way out-of-province flights will be prorated to half the maximum amount (i.e., \$750). Residents/fellows who choose to fly at a higher-class rate must provide a quote for the economy class equivalent for the same flight, showing the same dates and times.

## **8. What if my car rental or accommodation exceeds the daily allowance?**

At this time, the program has been approved to reimburse expenses up to the daily rates listed on the NORSTAR Physician Expense Claim Form. Any expenses that exceed the daily rate will be prorated to the maximum.

The program will continue to review travel expenses across Rural and Northern Ontario and will notify physicians of any approved changes.

## **9. What if I'm travelling to my elective/assignment with colleagues or family members?**

All payments for travel and accommodations during eligible electives must be made by the resident/fellow, with all receipts issued in the resident/fellow's name to be eligible for reimbursement. Expenses related to family travel are not eligible for reimbursement.

## **10. I've submitted my expense claim and associated receipts for an eligible NORSTAR assignment. When will I be reimbursed?**

Payments will be processed within four to six weeks from the date a complete claim (NORSTAR Physician Expense Claim Form and receipts) is received. Incomplete claims will result in processing delays.

Deposit slips will be sent to physicians (via email) within five to seven business days of the payment and should be reviewed upon receipt. In order to reimburse residents as quickly as possible, claims are processed with all eligible amounts paid in the initial payment. The deposit slip will provide information regarding any discrepancies in payment.

Additional documentation, such as missing receipts, descriptions of unique travel arrangements, or other clarification, can be provided via email to [norstar@ontariohealth.ca](mailto:norstar@ontariohealth.ca) for review and processing of additional payments thereafter.