

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
May 30, 2018

Northern Health Connections expands eligibility to improve access to health-related travel

Northern Health's Connections program is expanding passenger eligibility to include more people who might require assistance with travel related to health care needs and issues.

The Connections service is now open to clients who meet any of three new eligibility criteria:

- **Accessibility needs** - People with mobility challenges. All NHC buses are wheelchair/mobility accessible and include lifts and accessible washrooms.
- **60+** - Anyone 60 years older will be eligible to ride the NHC bus. A report from the Office of the Seniors Advocate recently pointed out that access to transportation is an increasing barrier to the long term health of seniors.
- **Companion** (definition expanded) – to include passengers who have to travel to support immediate family members who are receiving health care treatment or services outside of their home community.

“This expansion provides access to services for some of the most vulnerable people in the communities of Northern BC, the elderly and those with mobility issues,” said Minister of Health Adrian Dix. “Including an expanded definition of companions helps support families when their loved ones are receiving care in other communities.”

NH Connections continues to serve people who need to travel to out-of-town health care appointments (regardless of their age or income), NH staff & physicians and healthcare /medical students. While the expanded eligibility will assist more northerners, passengers who have scheduled medical appointments will take priority. Fares for travel are not changing, and passengers will no longer be required to book round-trip.

More information about the NH Connections program is available through the NH Connections booking centre at 1-888-647-4997, via e-mail at NHConnections@northernhealth.ca or visit us online at nhconnections.ca.

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