

Subject: IMPORTANT: COVID Housing Reimbursement Protocol [Effective Jan 17 to May 08, 2022]

Attachments: (1) COVID Housing Reimbursement Protocol & (2) Frequently Asked Questions Document

Dear NOSM Learners,

In order to enhance the safety of our learners throughout the pandemic, NOSM will adjust its current housing practices to address COVID-19 transmissibility concerns. During Step One or Two of the Government's Reopening Ontario Plan, NOSM will assign one learner per unit, if appropriate and necessary. As long as Programs (including UME, PGME, Physician Assistant Program, Health Sciences Program, Northern Ontario Dietetic Internship Program, Visiting Residents, and Agreements) are permitted to conduct clinical placements, there is a likelihood that cohabitation is occurring within NOSM Housing, given the limited supply of housing. This can be considered a cause for concern as the numbers of positive COVID cases increase not only in Northern Ontario but also in all of Ontario.

With the COVID numbers rising and restriction measures from our communities continuing to be implemented, there is no way to properly or efficiently implement the self-isolation measures in NOSM Housing while maintaining the ability for learners to complete placements outside of their home-base.

In order to help alleviate the amount of learners sharing space in NOSM Housing and to make it safer for all learners performing placements in our NOSM communities, NOSM is temporarily implementing a COVID Housing Reimbursement (maximum of \$3,000) to find self-arranged accommodations which might include options like a hotel suite, an AirBnB or other rental. This will be in effect only from January 17, 2022 (start of Block 8) to May 08, 2022 (end of Block 11).

This process will be implemented in three steps.

Step 1:

All housing that is **currently allocated will stay as is** (based on currently confirmed placement).

- Re-allocation will occur if self-isolation measures are needed on a case by case basis.
- At this point, you do not need to do anything for upcoming scheduled placements unless advised or you reach out to exercise the self-arranged option.

Step 2:

Effective immediately, any **new** housing allocations moving forward (based on newly confirmed placements) will be scheduled as follows:

- Single learner per unit basis from the January 17, 2021 (start of PGME Block 8) to May 08, 2022 (end of PGME Block 11).
- NOSM Housing will be prioritized as such:
 - If NOSM Housing is not occupied NOSM Housing will be first come first serve for single learner allocations.
 - Once NOSM Housing is occupied, any other learners will be eligible for a maximum reimbursement of \$3000 to book their own accommodations (via AirBnB, community contacts, local hotels, etc.) within the community of their confirmed placement.

- General Rule: Any learner (internal or external) that would be provided housing will be eligible for the housing reimbursement (i.e. PGME, UME, HS, PA, NODIP or Agreements)

Procedure: Email will be sent by NOSM Housing to affected learners as their confirmed placements are entered into PaNDa, which will indicate the reimbursement option to find self-arranged housing.

Step 3:

Any learners that currently have a confirmed placement and is funded for housing will be eligible to take \$3,000 maximum reimbursement to arrange for their own housing accommodations within the respective community of their confirmed placement [email to come from respective Programs].

- For NOSM residents: The reimbursement will be available for each clinical placement that is outside of their home-base if considered core, elective, and core external and/or 4 weeks or higher in duration.
- For NOSM residents already using Housing Option 2: They will be eligible to receive a reimbursement of up to \$3,000 during this effective time period. Do not submit through the 'Housing Option 2', all claims must be submitted using the COVID Housing Reimbursement procedure that is detailed below. Residents are to submit under their respective "Program" and then "Travel" options when completing the Expense Reimbursement Claim.
- For NOSM students: The reimbursement will be available for each clinical placement that is outside of their home-base if considered CBM ICE 108 & 110, or electives of 4 weeks or higher in duration at the time of allocation.
- For Health Sciences or Physician Assistant Programs: The reimbursement will be available for any housing that is funded by NOSM.
- For Visiting Electives and Agreements: The reimbursement will be available for any housing that is funded by NOSM Inter-University Agreements.

Procedure for NOSM: Email will be transmitted to learners by respective Programs to indicate the reimbursement option to find self-arranged housing.

Procedure for Learners: Email NOSM Housing to indicate the selection of the reimbursement option for self-arranged housing.

Reimbursement Processes:

All learners not placed in NOSM Housing are required to pay for the accommodation and can submit for reimbursement by NOSM as soon as the landlord/host/hotel issues a receipt for rent. Claims will be processed efficiently once received with all correct supporting documentation. All reimbursement claims must be submitted no later than 90 days upon placement completion.

Eligible Expenses:

*any expense that is directly attributed to the cost of housing up to a maximum of \$3,000 total

*all expenses must follow the guidelines and principles of the NOSM Travel Management and General Expenses Policy (TMGE)

- Rent
- Parking
- Internet and Utilities (if not included in the rent)
- Meal Allotment: only allowed if renting a hotel room with no kitchenette (receipt are mandatory & following the TMGE rules)
- Accommodations with Family and Friends: \$30/day can be claimed

For LEARNERS:

1. Visit www.NOSM.ca
2. Click on 'MyNOSM' and choose the option 'Expense Reimbursement' under the Learners tab.
3. Download a new version of the 'Travel Expense Summary Form' and fill out the form to the best of your ability. The Travel Expense Summary Form is a SMART form and if information is missing there will be a red marker highlighting the missing information.
4. When completing the Travel Expense Summary Form please add the following in the comments section: 'COVID Housing'.
5. When submitting the claim through the portal, please select your respective program.
6. In order to submit the claim, please include the completed Travel Expense Summary Form and **all** Receipt (needs to include payment or paid with credit card).
7. Attach both required documents and submit.

NOSM understands that these continue to be stressful times and hope these measures will help ensure the safety of all NOSM learners and help mitigate the spread of the pandemic in our northern communities. We hope that this reimbursement option provides learners with the ability to increase their level of safety throughout the winter months of the pandemic.

Wishing you all the best during your clinical placements,

NOSM's Community Relations Unit