

Guidelines for Travel support for PLHIVs on Anti Retroviral Treatment

Background note:

ART defaulter is the most important reason behind mortality of the PLHIV on ART and emergence of drug resistant HIV in the community. Distance of ART centre from the client's residence is one of the most important reasons for ART drop out or non adherence. ART is a lifelong medicine and it is to be collected by the eligible clients regularly (mostly monthly) from ART centre (or LAC/LAC Plus/FI-ART Centre). Due to distance factor involved, it has been decided to compensate their wage loss as well as out of pocket travel expenses for attending ART Centres for collecting ART drugs and their clinical check-up. All the eligible clients will be reimbursed a fixed amount of monetary support annually to meet their wage loss and out of pocket travel expenses. This endeavour also aims at improving Nevirapine coverage and timely testing of HIV exposed baby for their HIV free survival benefit.

Goal:

To reduce out of pocket expenses and compensate for wage loss and transport cost with ultimate objective to reduce HIV related morbidity and mortality of the HIV infected clients and HIV exposed babies.

Objective:

- *To improve ART adherence of PLHIVs on ART*
- *To optimize Nevirapine coverage and timely HIV testing of the HIV exposed babies*
- *Any other intervention to assist the PLHIVs economically*

Beneficiaries of the scheme:

PLHIVs on ART (Both general/Non-ANC clients and Pregnant women)

Inclusion Criteria:

- *Client should be initiated on ART and having more than 95% adherence during the last twelve months*
- *HIV positive pregnant woman whose exposed baby has received Nevirapine/other ARV prophylaxis for a minimum duration of six weeks (if not stopped beforehand due to medical indication)*
- *Client should have a valid bank account at any public / private / co-operative Bank/Regional Rural Bank (RRB)/Gramin Bank with core banking service (CBS) and NEFT/RTGS facility.*
- *Clients after initiation of ART, had to stop ARV medicine due to medical reason duly certified by Nodal Officer ART centre.*

Guidelines for Travel support for PLHIVs on Anti Retroviral Treatment

Exclusion Criteria:

- *Clients who have less than 95% adherence in any occasion during the last twelve months*

Monetary support:

- All positive clients on ART will be given a sum of Rs. six hundred only (Rs.600/-) annually.
- All new ART initiated clients will be given a sum of Rs. six hundred only (Rs.600/-) at the time of ART initiation. Further annual disbursement will depend upon the inclusion criteria laid down earlier.
- All positive pregnant women will be offered the same benefit on ART initiation at ART Centre.
 - The positive mother will be given an additional sum of Rs.800/-(Eight hundred only) on completion of at least six weeks continuous Nevirapine/ARV prophylaxis and getting Early Infant Diagnosis test done for her baby. The amount will only be given provided both the conditions are met. For multiple pregnancy (like twin, triplets etc), the mother will be offered the amount multiplied by number of eligible babies (e.g., for twin live babies completing both the prophylaxis and EID test, mother should receive an amount of $Rs.800*2 = Rs.1600$). However, all positive pregnant women will be eligible for this benefit for two successful pregnancies only during her lifetime. This benefit will not be extended beyond twice in her lifetime.

Operational Framework:

- To avail this benefit a prescribed requisition form (Annexure-A1 for general/non-ANC clients and/or A2 for pregnant mother – as the case may be) is to be filled up either by the beneficiary himself/herself or by the concerned ARTC staff. The form should be filled up in legible handwriting where the client's ART registration number, name of the ART Centre, Name of the Bank, account number, type of the account, branch name, branch code, IFSC code, mobile number of beneficiary or his/her spouse or any adult member of his/her family, e-mail address, if available and Aadhaar number, if available are to be filled up properly. The form should have the signature or verified thumb impression of the beneficiary as well as signature alongwith official seal of the ART Nodal Officer or Medical Officer of the said ART Centre.
- The duly filled up form should be scanned and sent to WBSAP&CS via e-mail to a particular dedicated e mail ID for this purpose. (**grant4plhiv@gmail.com**). WBSAP&CS will transfer the requisite amount to the client's bank account as per requisition form .All the PLHIVs who are on ART will be provided with the said scheme benefit on launch of

Guidelines for Travel support for PLHIVs on Anti Retroviral Treatment

the scheme. Subsequent release of fund however, will depend on PLHIVs' eligibility for the same as per the inclusion criteria as already stated.

- For positive pregnant mother, upon completion of six week Nevirapine/ARV prophylaxis and after the first sample collection of the HIV exposed baby for HIV diagnosis under EID program, Medical Officer in Charge of the ICTC (Taking care for both the conditions) will issue a certificate in prescribed format (Annexure-B) in triplicate. One copy will be kept by the ICTC for future reference (for documentation purpose), two copies will be delivered to Client who will eventually submit one copy to the ART Centre from which she is collecting ART drugs. ART Centre will fill up the requisition form (Annexure-A1 and/or A2) and submit as stated before. In case the baby has completed Nevirapine/ARV prophylaxis from one ICTC and EID testing is performed from other ICTC, the later ICTC will provide the photocopy of TRRF form to the client or will issue a formal letter by Medical Officer in Charge of the ICTC to the former ICTC. The former ICTC will issue the certificate for the same which will be submitted to ART Centre by the client.
- If the necessary fund has not been transferred to the account of the beneficiary, grievance may be intimated to the same mail ID by the ART Centre mentioning the formal details (like- client's ART registration number, name of the ART centre, Name of the Bank, account number, type of account, branch name, IFSC code, mobile number, e mail ID and Aadhaar number) and date of requisition.
- The data entry operator or counsellor of the ART Centre will maintain a database in excel format keeping all the details of the client like name, date of ART initiation, client's ART registration number, name of the ART centre, Name of the Bank, account number, type of account, branch name, IFSC code, mobile number, e mail ID and Aadhaar number, date of 1st requisition, purpose of the requisition (For travel support to collect ART or for providing comprehensive prophylactic/ diagnostic facility to the HIV exposed baby) next date of requisition. Annexure-C will provide an idea on how to keep the record. At the start of each calendar month, ART staff has to check whom of the old beneficiaries are becoming eligible for next travel reimbursement during this month.
- All the transferred-In patient from the ART Centre from other state(s) will be treated as new case and the first travel support benefit should be requisitioned on the first ARV collection date in new ART Centre after transferred-in. In case of intra state transfer, the transferring ART Centre will send a formal e-mail to the transferred ART Centre with a copy to CST division of WBSAP&CS regarding the client's transfer out mentioning the last date of receipt of travel support and whether the client has received any such support for her baby (For PPTCT purpose) and if so, then for how many times. The new ART Centre (to which the client got new enrolment after transfer out) will start doing requisition after completion of twelve months from the date of received of last financial benefit.

Guidelines for Travel support for PLHIVs on Anti Retroviral Treatment

- Before requisition of next travel support, the ART staff has to see whether the client has taken ART for the last twelve months uninterruptedly and adherence rate was more than 95%. If a client has less than 95% adherence in any month, the next date for becoming eligible for next travel support requisition, will be twelve months after adherence resumed to be more than 95% for the client. If ART has to be stopped in between due to Medical indication, adherence criteria should not be taken into account for next requisition.
- ART Centre will make necessary communications – both verbal to each client as well as in form of poster(s) regarding the scheme and its benefits.