



FAQs for Medical Travel Assistance

1. What is the purpose of Family Support Services (FSS)?

The program serves as a community resource for economic services to enrolled and non-enrolled members who reside on the Qualla Boundary and the five-county service area. FSS provides medical travel support that is designed to offset the cost of medical travel. Applicants and patients will still be financially responsible for any additional medical travel expenses over the FSS benefits. The FSS program **DOES NOT** reimburse expenses for medical-related travel.

2. How is the FSS program funded?

The FSS program is Tribally funded, and, like other Tribal programs, management is responsible for being good financial stewards of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) financial resources to ensure future generations can also receive benefits.

3. Is there an application process to receive benefits from FSS?

Yes. To receive assistance, an FSS application and eligibility form must be completed and supported by a W-9 tax form for the Patient or parent/guardian of the Patient. Applicants will be required to provide proof of appointment or medical Referral. Participants may email the proof of appointment or medical referral to: medicalrecords@ebci-nsn.gov. FSS staff may ask the client questions or request additional documentation as they deem necessary.

4. The FSS program provides medical travel assistance. Are there different types of assistance?

Yes, there are two different types of assistance.

Tier 1 Assistance is Fuel Assistance only. Appointments within the sixty (60) mile radius, +/- ten (10) miles of Cherokee are within the scope of Tier One Medical Travel. Orthodontic Appointments, per the Children's Dental program, are **ineligible** for Tier One Medical Travel.

Tier 2 Assistance is Fuel Assistance AND Financial Assistance. Tier 2 assistance is intended for appointments sixty (60) miles, +/- ten 10 miles outside of Cherokee.

5. What are the current gas voucher rates?

Destination	Miles from Cherokee	Gas Voucher Value
Sylva	15	Nine Dollars (\$9)
Waynesville/Clyde/Haywood	30	Twenty Dollars (\$20)
Asheville/Hendersonville	60	Twenty-nine Dollars (\$29)
Franklin	30	Twenty Dollars (\$20)
Beyond Asheville	>60	Fifty-six Dollars (\$56)

Table data updated 02/20/2024. Gas Voucher Value is subject to change.

*Gas vouchers will **not** be provided to attend appointments in Sylva. The exception is for matters relating to cancer patients only.

6. Does the Family Support Program assist with medical overnight stays?

Yes. Tier Two assistance is intended for appointments sixty (60) miles, +/- ten 10 miles outside of Cherokee. Tier Two assistance can be requested for a single overnight trip, including meals when required to attend a medical appointment that is sixty (60) miles, +/- ten 10 miles outside of Cherokee, and/or the participant is informed not to travel by a physician.

*Any request for Tier Two overnight assistance, not requiring overnight stay in the hospital, **AND** where ample time remains in the day to return in a day's drive, will require written directions by the physician to not travel or remain immobile as part of treatment, diagnosis, etc. This document must remain current, pertinent to the medical situation presented, and be on file apart from the Medical Referral or Proof of Appointment.

7. What is a designated support person?

A designated support person is an individual who has agreed to assist the Patient in conducting their business, particularly their assistance during their hospitalization or medical procedure. By opting into the Medical Travel Assistance Program, the Patient and Designated Support Persons must communicate and access services through the FSS office. Patients will be asked to complete a Designation of Support Person Form that identifies the individual(s) who have been authorized to conduct Medical Travel Assistance on their behalf.

8. Does the Family Support Program provide financial assistance for my designated support person?

Yes. Medical travel assists both the Patient and one (1) Designated Support Person. If the patient is a child, assistance will be written on their behalf. The assistance includes the Patient and one (1) parent, guardian, or kinship placement person. Medical travel assistance may be provided to a non-enrolled spouse/significant other in cases where support and comfort are needed during the hospitalization of an EBCI-enrolled person.