



ICU patient transfers: frequently asked questions for patients and families

1. Why is my loved one being moved to another Intensive Care Unit?

The number of patients in ICU in Saskatchewan has grown to a point where we can no longer safely provide a high level of care without help. Our partners in other provinces have made beds available to ensure we can preserve that level of care for every Saskatchewan patient.

2. How was my loved one selected to be transferred?

Our clinical team is assessing the needs of all patients daily to carefully match each patient to an appropriate available bed. Your loved one has been determined to be medically stable and appropriate to transfer.

3. Is transferring them safe?

We will ensure they are medically safe for transport, and they will be moved in a fully equipped air medevac aircraft staffed by highly skilled health care professionals that have experience caring for critical care patients.

4. Do I get a say on whether they are moved, or where they are moved to? Can I say no?

No. Unfortunately, patient transfers are not optional. The SHA Evacuation Transport Team will make the final decision, and we will work with you to make sure you understand all of the arrangements, and provide you with contact information for the receiving facility.

5. Can I travel with them?

Unfortunately, no. Family members are not permitted to join patients on transport between facilities. They will be well cared for by our partners both during the trip and once they arrive at the next hospital.

6. Can I visit?

Yes, although details for visitation may vary by facility. The SHA will cover travel and accommodation costs for two essential family/support people if you want to be near your loved one.

The decision to travel is yours to make, and may be subject to visitor restrictions at the receiving facility. We want to provide you with the financial support required to be there for your loved one, if that is your decision.

Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.

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7. When will my loved one be able to come home?

They will be transported back to Saskatchewan once they are well enough to be discharged from the ICU, or once the demand on Saskatchewan ICU slows and we can fully support them here again. We do not currently have a timeline for when that might happen.

8. Do I have to pay for them to move, or return?

There will be no charges to transfer a patient to a different facility or return them back.

9. Can I speak to someone at the hospital they are moving to?

Yes, we will provide you with contact information for someone at the receiving facility and can expect to be kept informed throughout the transfer.

10. How will I get updates on their care?

Your care team can provide more information once arrangements are made with the receiving facility.

11. How will they return home once they are able?

We will again work with our partners to arrange medical transport for them. You will be kept informed of the process as it unfolds.

12. What if they die while they are in another province?

Providing the best possible care for your loved one is our first priority. Every possible resource will be dedicated to them. Should your loved one die while outside of Saskatchewan, the care team would work with you and provide any necessary support, and would arrange for transport back to Saskatchewan. All costs would be covered.

13. Does vaccination status have an impact on transfers?

No. Our priority is providing the most appropriate care for each patient.