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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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Ministry of Social Development

### **B.C. government restores medically necessary equipment and supplies**

VICTORIA – After a re-examination of current resources and demand, Social Development Minister Stephanie Cadieux announced that government is restoring a number of medically necessary medical equipment and supplies for clients on income and disability assistance.

“While looking at how to better help families by making moderate changes to income and disability assistance, I also asked for information on how to approach some of the restrictions to medical equipment and supplies,” said Cadieux. “We know that these restored items will mean a lot to those who need them, and I’m confident that these changes meet the right balance.”

In April 2010, in response to demands of an increased caseload, some medical equipment and supplies were removed from being eligible in order to ensure that benefits would be provided to as many people as possible. The ministry has been closely monitoring the effects of these changes.

In August 2011, orthotics supplements were expanded to ensure basic mobility needs were addressed. The ministry is now making some further change to restore additional supports, including:

- ventilator supplies
- bariatric scooters
- standing frames
- positioning chairs
- non-conventional glucose meters
- inhaler accessory devices -“spacers”
- apnea monitors
- toe orthoses
- underliners for orthoses
- needles/syringes for medication delivery
- a second floor-to-ceiling pole
- foot abduction orthosis
- transfer aids
- positioning items on a bed
- tracheostomy supplies
- nebulizers
- humidifiers for tracheostomy patients

The changes will come into effect in October 2012.

On June 11, 2012, the B.C. government announced some common-sense changes to income and disability assistance programs as part of the first pillar of its Families First Agenda. The changes, most of which will come into effect later this year, will ensure government is providing the supports people need to get back into the workforce, while helping improve financial outcomes for vulnerable individuals and families. These changes to medical equipment and supplies support the Families First Agenda by ensuring medically necessary supports are in place to help those who need them most.

For more information on these changes, clients can go to: [www.gov.bc.ca/hsd](http://www.gov.bc.ca/hsd)

A backgrounder follows.

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# BACKGROUND

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## Reinstated medical supplies and equipment

### Ventilator Supplies

- To avoid an imminent and substantial danger to health
- For example, sterilization items and distilled water
- Two-year supply policy

### Bariatric Scooters

- Medically essential to achieve or maintain basic mobility
- Provided when weight capacity of conventional scooter would be exceeded by body weight
- Cost limit of \$4,500
- Five-year replacement period

### Standing Frames

- Medically essential to achieve or maintain a person's positioning
- Five-year replacement period

### Positioning Chairs

- Medically essential to achieve or maintain a person's positioning
- Note: "lift" chairs are not positioning chairs
- Five-year replacement period

### Non-conventional Glucose Meters

- Medically essential to test blood glucose levels
- For example, continuous or talking glucose meters, for when conventional glucose meters are not appropriate for the person
- Five-year replacement period

### Inhaler Accessory Devices ("spacers")

- Medically essential to deliver medication
- For example, spacers or valved holding chambers
- One-year replacement period

### Apnea monitors

- Medically essential to monitor breathing
- Five-year replacement period

### Toe Orthoses

- Medically essential to achieve or maintain basic functionality
- For example, toe spacers and other items
- One-year replacement period

**Underliners for Orthoses**

- Medically essential to use an orthosis
- For example, sleeves and specialized socks for braces

**Needles/Syringes for Medication Delivery and Feeding**

- To avoid an imminent and substantial danger to health
- Two-year supply policy

**A second floor-to-ceiling pole**

- Medically essential to facilitate transfers
- Five-year replacement period

**Foot abduction orthoses**

- Medically essential to achieve or maintain basic functionality
- For example, Dennis Brown boots and bars
- No replacement period due to frequent replacement due to growth

**Transfer aids**

- Medically essential to facilitate transfers
- Includes belts, boards, slider sheets
- Five-year replacement period

**Positioning items on a bed**

- Medically essential to achieve or maintain a person's positioning
- For example, symmetrikit, sidelyers, and bed wedges

**Tracheostomy supplies**

- To avoid an imminent and substantial danger to health
- Two-year supply policy

**Nebulizers**

- To avoid an imminent and substantial danger to health
- Five-year replacement period
- One year for accessories and supplies

**Tracheostomy humidifier**

- Medically essential to moisturize air in order to allow a tracheostomy patient to breathe
- Five-year replacement period

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