



AiSH

Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped

IMPROVING AiSH

May 2007

Explaining the Changes to AiSH

**Financial
Assistance**

**Health-related
Assistance**

**Supplementary
Assistance**

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Introduction

In February 2005, the MLA AISH Review Committee made eleven recommendations to improve and renew the AISH program. In April 2005, the Government of Alberta accepted the recommendations and immediately increased the maximum monthly living allowance and employment income exemptions.

As we continued to make changes, we introduced personal benefits to help with extra expenses, made changes to income exemptions and improved training for AISH staff in cooperation with community disability organizations. We also increased the maximum monthly living allowance again in April 2006.

We are now continuing to improve the program to make sure it is more flexible and responsive to your needs.

Living Allowance

In April 2005, we made a commitment to review the living allowance every two years, starting in 2007.

After this year's review, we increased the maximum monthly living allowance to \$1,050. The maximum monthly living allowance for people receiving modified AISH increased to \$315 per month.

We will continue to review the living allowance every two years.

Reporting Income

Many AISH clients have other types of income such as Canada Pension Plan-Disability, employment income or investment income. For some, their income varies from year to year, but for many, their income remains relatively stable. Changes to the reporting processes will make it easier for clients whose income remains relatively stable.

Your AISH worker will work with you to determine whether your income should be reported once a month, four times each year (quarterly) or once a year (annually). This will depend on how much your or your cohabiting partner's income changes during the year.

If you are reporting your income quarterly or annually and your income goes down, you will need to advise your worker. They will review your situation and recalculate your living allowance if needed.

Treatment of Income

We are also changing the way we treat income. The new income rules are less complicated and easier to understand. Some types of income continue to be partially or fully exempt.

AISH is treating income similar to how it is reported to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). In general, any income that is reported to the CRA will also be considered as income for the purposes of AISH. With your consent, we will be able to use CRA data to determine your income for the year, making the process easier for you.

There are a few situations where income that is not reported to CRA will need to be used to calculate your AISH living allowance. For example, employment or pension income for First Nations clients on reserve will still need to be reported to your AISH worker, as this income does not have to be submitted to the Canada Revenue Agency.

Assets

The asset limit for AISH stays at \$100,000. This does not include your house, your vehicle and one vehicle that has been modified for your disability. This has not changed.

We have made changes for clients moving into a facility. If you have permanently moved into a facility, but need time to sell your home, you may be eligible for a temporary exemption of the asset limit so you can continue to receive AISH while you sell your home.

Overpayments

An overpayment happens when you receive more AISH benefits than you are entitled to. Reporting your income annually or quarterly should reduce the instances of overpayment.

If you receive an overpayment, you may need to repay it. Before, when AISH would assess an overpayment, we began collecting immediately. Now, you may appeal the overpayment before any collection begins.

Third Party Payments and Financial Administrators

Third party payments occur when the AISH program pays a bill, for things like rent or utilities, to someone else on your behalf.

Third party payments can still be made, but now the AISH program needs your consent.

Financial administrators, who can help you with budgeting, can still be set up with your consent.

A financial administrator can be appointed without consent, but only when it is approved by a committee who determines that a client is not able to manage his or her own money.

The duties of a financial administrator are outlined in the legislation at <http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca> .

New *AISH Act* and Regulations

The MLA AISH Review Committee suggested the *AISH Act* be rewritten to reflect the renewed program. This includes updating the language and allows AISH to better respond to your needs.

The new Act and Regulations are available online from the Queen's Printer at www.qp.gov.ab.ca .

- Click on **List Acts**
for the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped Act.
- Click on **List Regulations**
for the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped Regulation.

You can also get a copy by calling the Queen's Printer at:
(toll-free) 310-0000
and ask the operator to connect you to (780) 427-4952.

If you reside in Edmonton or area you can call (780) 427-4952.

Contact Information and Alternate Formats

This booklet, along with more information about the AISH program and policy manual, is available online at www.scs.gov.ab.ca/AISH.

For more information about any of the changes, or if you would like additional copies of this booklet, please call the AISH Information Line at 1-866-477-8589 or your AISH worker. This booklet is also available in alternate formats.

If you do not know who your AISH worker is, you can call 310-0000 (toll-free) and the operator can connect you to the AISH office nearest you. AISH offices are open Monday to Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Clients with TTY Deaf or Hard of Hearing Relay can reach Alberta Government offices by calling:

(780) 427-9999 in Edmonton

1-800-232-7215 in other Alberta locations

This booklet can be downloaded
off the AISH website at
www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/AISH

For additional copies of this booklet,
or if you require the guide in an alternate format,
please contact your AISH worker.