

**Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care**

Primary Health Care  
Negotiations and Accountability  
Management Division

1075 Bay Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto ON M5S 2B1  
Tel: 416 325-3575  
Toll free: 1 866 766-0266  
Fax: 416 326-4684

**Ministère de la Santé  
et des Soins de longue durée**

Soins primaires  
Division des négociations et  
de la gestion de la responsabilisation

1075, rue Bay, 9<sup>e</sup> étage  
Toronto ON M5S 2B1  
Tél. : 416 325-3575  
Sans frais : 1 866 766-0266  
Télééc. : 416 326-4684



**MEMORANDUM TO:** Executive Directors  
Family Health Teams

**FROM:** Phil Graham  
a/Manager, Family Health Teams  
Primary Care Health Branch

**SUBJECT:** Nurse Practitioner Service Encounter Reporting and Tracking (NP SERT) Initiative – Questions & Answers

---

The purpose of this memo is to provide clarity with respect to the recently announced NP SERT initiative in Family Health Teams (FHT). A number of Family Health Team Executive Directors have been in contact with the ministry and have provided helpful feedback based on the initial implementation materials. The ministry has also met with a group of FHT Executive Directors, who provided advice on next steps in the program as well as issues that require further clarification.

The below Questions & Answers are being provided to address issues that have been raised by a number of FHTs. Contact information is provided below should you have additional questions.

**1. What is the NP SERT Initiative?**

The NP SERT Initiative is a fully automated reporting system that will allow FHTs to submit their NPs' monthly patient service encounter information through the ministry's Medical Claims Payment System.

The SERT initiative provides NPs with 124 new service encounter codes (also referred to as Q codes) currently identified as within the NP's scope of practice. These Q codes should not be construed as shadow billing. They are being used to automate the service encounter reporting process.

The NP SERT Initiative will replace the current manual FHT NP performance reporting, therefore, participation is mandatory.

## **2. Why is the SERT Initiative being implemented?**

The current manual FHT NP quarterly performance reports provided to the ministry do not provide sufficient information to enable the ministry to effectively assess if the needs of patients and communities are being met.

Electronic submission of patient service encounter information through the SERT Initiative will result in the following outcomes:

- Increased ability to track the impact of NPs in improving patient access to primary health care services;
- Increased accuracy in NP performance data/patient utilization data;
- Increased accountability of program expenditures;
- Enhanced ability to monitor and evaluate chronic disease management and health promotion/prevention service delivery by NPs; and,
- Improved health human resources and health service planning.

## **3. Is the NP SERT Initiative being implemented across all FHTs?**

The NP SERT Initiative will be implemented in 151 FHTs. The ministry intends to implement the NP SERT Initiative within the Wave 4 and Wave 5 FHTs once they become fully operational (anticipated in the 2011-12 fiscal year).

## **4. Will the SERT Initiative be implemented for other Interdisciplinary Health Providers?**

The first step is to implement the SERT Initiative for NPs within FHTs. Once the SERT Initiative has been fully implemented for NPs within FHTs, the ministry may explore other opportunities to utilize automated reporting for other Interdisciplinary Health Providers (IHPs) within FHTs.

## **5. Why are payments being provided to FHTs for the submission of service encounter information under the SERT Initiative?**

Payments related to the SERT Initiative (i.e. the provision of \$1.00 per service encounter submitted) are being provided to FHTs to recognize the additional administrative efforts required to collect the SERT data which will contribute towards the improved planning and evaluation of FHT NP programs.

Please note that the NP SERT Initiative is not a shadow-billing process. It is an automated reporting system that will replace the current manual FHT NP performance reporting.

## **6. How will payments be directed to the FHTs?**

Once registration of your organization and your NP(s) is complete, the ministry will send a confirmation letter to your organization which will identify your SERT commencement date and your new Group Number. This new Group Number is a unique identifier used to track

your NP service encounter information and facilitate your SERT payments (i.e. the provision of \$1.00 per service encounter submitted).

If you have not completed your SERT registration paperwork, please complete and send the entire package to the following address:

Service Encounter Reporting and Tracking Initiative  
Primary Health Care  
80 Queen Street, 3rd Floor  
Kingston, ON  
K7K 6W7

If you require any assistance with the registration process, please do not hesitate to contact Theresa O'Neill directly at (613) 536-3234, toll-free 1-866-766-0266 or via email at [theresa.o'neill@ontario.ca](mailto:theresa.o'neill@ontario.ca).

#### **7. How may the FHTs use their SERT payments?**

The use of SERT funding is at the discretion of the FHT, subject to the accountability requirements contained in the letter dated December 17, 2010 from Susan Fitzpatrick, Assistant Deputy Minister, Negotiations and Accountability Management Division. This includes the requirement that SERT payments are subject to the *Public Sector Compensation Restraint to Protect Public Services Act, 2010*, which prohibits increases to the rate of pay for non-unionized employees until April 2012.

Subject to the above noted accountability requirements, FHTs are encouraged to utilize the SERT funding in a manner most appropriate to their particular FHT. Although the Act prohibits salary increases for non-unionized FHT employees, FHTs could use this funding for items such as: non-salaried administrative costs; equipment purchases; education or training opportunities, etc.. As with other FHT revenues and expenditures, it is expected that SERT funding will be reported in the FHT's annual audited statement.

#### **8. What will happen to the current NP quarterly service reports?**

The SERT Initiative will replace the current quarterly NP service reports submitted through WERS (Web Enabled Reporting System). Although the SERT Initiative will replace the current quarterly NP service reporting process we ask that you continue to provide your quarterly NP service reports to the ministry through WERS until you have been provided a SERT commencement date from the ministry.

Please note that your last required quarterly NP service report will be determined by your SERT Initiative commencement date. For example, if your commencement date falls on February 1, 2011, your last required quarterly NP service report would be: Q4, 2010-11.

**9. What if an EMR vendor introduces additional costs associated with adding NPs into the billing software solutions?**

Generally, if there are additional costs involved it is expected that they would not be substantial. However, specific details on the costs introduced by EMR vendors will be particular to the vendor and the contract that has been negotiated. If budget impacts are identified as a result of adding NPs to the software, FHTs are encouraged to contact their ministry Senior Program Consultant.

Working together, the SERT initiative will help to track and monitor important service encounter data better in order to improve our understanding and appreciation of patient care delivered across the province. I would like to thank you for your assistance and on-going cooperation in making this initiative work.

If you have any other additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Giovanni De Giorgio directly at (613) 536-3271, toll-free 1-866-766-0266 or via email at [giovanni.degiorgio@ontario.ca](mailto:giovanni.degiorgio@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,

Phil Graham  
a/Manager, Family Health Teams  
Primary Health Care