

FACTSHEET

October 9, 2008

Ministry of Housing and Social Development

OPTICAL PROGRAM

Eyeglasses

- The BC Employment and Assistance Program provides prescription eyeglasses coverage between \$108 and \$179 based on the type of eyeglasses required (e.g. single vision vs. bifocal lenses).
- Coverage is available to all income assistance clients (children and adults) and also children in low-income families through the Healthy Kids Program.
- Adult income assistance clients between the ages of 19 and 64 are also eligible for replacement prescription eyeglasses every three years.
- Children under the age of 19 are eligible for replacement eyeglasses every 12 months.

Eye Exams

- The BC Employment and Assistance Program covers the costs of routine eye examinations provided by optometrists and ophthalmologists for income assistance clients between the ages of 19 and 64 under the Optical Program.
- Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers, Medical Services Only clients, and Hardship Assistance clients who are Canadian citizens also receive coverage under this program.
- Rates are as follows: \$44.83 to an optometrist and \$48.90 to an ophthalmologist. Rates provide for one exam every two years.
- Eye care professionals are paid directly by the ministry for eye exams. This is not a reimbursement program requiring clients to pay up front and submit a claim.
- Pacific Blue Cross administers the program. Clients only need to present their CareCards and indicate they are on income assistance for Pacific Blue Cross to verify their eligibility for coverage with the eye exam provider.
- Adults over the age of 65 and children of parents receiving income assistance receive basic eye exam coverage through the Medical Services Plan.
- Medically necessary eye exams are covered through the Medical Services Plan as a basic health benefit for all clients on income assistance.

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For more information: The Ministry of Housing and Social Development Info Line at:
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