

## Healthcare Professionals

It would be helpful to read the following information to understand our equipment loan policies and procedures so that together we can help our ALS clients/patients live their best life possible.

ALS NB & NS considers our occupational and physical therapists, speech language pathologists, respirologists, and other members of the health sector that serve people living with ALS our partners. We also consider our vendors that help keep our equipment in good working order part of our team.

We cannot meet all the needs of our clients alone and depend on each other to make the lives of those living with ALS easier.

Our promise to people and their families living with ALS – You Are Not Alone.

We look forward to working with you and your ALS patient(s) on your caseload.

**ALS New Brunswick and Nova Scotia is a non-profit organization with limited financial, technical, and human resources.** Our equipment loan policies are developed so that we can ensure that every person with ALS can expect a basic level of service and so that we are doing the most good for the most people.

**ALS NB & NS loans an average of five pieces of equipment** to the people we serve. That's about 600 pieces a year valued at \$800,00+. We loan the equipment **without needs testing** as ALS is an expensive disease for anyone.

**ALS NB & NS does not ask people diagnosed with ALS to exhaust all other measures before they apply for help.** The families do not have the time and emotional resources to do that. By the time they jump through hoops to get one piece of equipment, another is needed.

**Only 50% of our families living with ALS carry private health insurance.** For the ones that have private insurance, most policies have a cap of \$25,000 for a lifetime of assistive equipment. As well the deductibles or co-payments can be expensive. **ALS NB & NS encourages people to borrow equipment as much as possible before going to insurance.** That way, they can save the insurance for equipment the society either does not provide or has a waiting list for.

**ALS NB & NS does have an annual budget to help with the insurance co-payments.** When we cover the co-payment we ask that the equipment be donated back when it is no longer required. The decision to cover the co-payment is contingent on how much funding is left in our annual budget and on equipment that we are short on.

The **equipment loan program is a recycled program.** New equipment is acquired through donations or when we get a windfall – The Ice Bucket Challenge, a major or estate gift, or other fundraising means.

That means, **our clients do not always have the latest technology or the latest model.**

**ALS NB-NS's goal is to be able to provide a basic level of service/equipment for every person diagnosed with ALS in our provinces.** As you know, there is a wide variety of equipment available for people living with ALS and there are many options to help people remain comfortable, safe, communicating and mobile. The options to keep someone living well with ALS range from very basic equipment to high end, high tech options. **Our goal is to ensure that every person living with ALS can breathe, is mobile, can communicate, is safe.**

**To ensure that we maintain an inventory at a level where we can provide the basic level of services please help us with the following.**

1. ALS NB & NS **does not place equipment on hold** until documentation (a prescription) is received from a health care professional.
2. **Requests for equipment are filled in the order that they are received** (upon all documentation having been received).

Why? If we place equipment on hold waiting for documentation, we are unfairly preventing another client who has the same need, has been assessed, and for whom we have all of the documentation.

3. Please do **not at any time authorize repair, adjustments, or storage of equipment in another venue without prior approval from ALS NB & NS.**

Why? If equipment is older, and repairs are expensive, ALS NB & NS may choose to de-inventory the piece of equipment and replace it instead. ALS NB & NS has authorized dealers with whom we work. We have to monitor and track our budget. One client use modifications may prevent that piece of equipment from being used by future clients.

At no time can any piece of equipment loaned by ALS NB & NS be disassembled and pieces be put on another piece of equipment not owned by the Society. From time to time an exception may be considered under extraordinary circumstances. Permission must be received from ALS NB & NS before any decision is made to modify equipment.

Why: To keep warranties intact, to be keep track of all accessories owned by ALS NB & NS.

4. **Equipment will be picked up at the address to which it was originally delivered.** Families and health care professionals cannot authorize moving or storing equipment at another location.

Why? ALS NB & NS must at all times know where equipment is stored. Auditors from the Canada Revenue Agency require that we can at any time locate the equipment and verify our inventory. ALS NB & NS cannot always pick up equipment immediately and it can get easily lost and damaged at other locations.

5. Equipment cannot be transferred from one client to another without having been returned to ALS NB & NS's warehouse.

Why? ALS NB & NS must sanitize, maintain, and test the equipment before it is delivered to another client. Records must be adjusted so that we know which client has which equipment.

6. ALS NB & NS tracks all equipment being shipped by an outside contractor. All shipping instructions and inquiries will be handled by ALS NB & NS staff.
7. If a client, along with their health care professional makes a decision to obtain new equipment utilizing either the Department of Social Development or their insurance, **ALS NB & NS cannot loan equipment in the "interim"**.

Why? The cost of delivering a piece of larger equipment like a wheelchair or a hospital bed can run from \$400 - \$1,200. To deliver the equipment and pick it up 4 - 6 weeks later is a cost that ALS NB & NS cannot continue to withstand without undue consequences on other programs. The most good for the most people.

8. ALS NB & NS does not loan equipment for trial as it is cost prohibitive to do so.

Thank you for being our partner in caring for our shared ALS clients/patients. Although we have guiding policies, we are always open to new ideas. Sometimes we'll be able to accommodate, sometimes we won't be able to change our policies. But we will always try to do the most good for the most people.

Our **ALS Walk Strong** event is a our biggest fundraiser of the year – our bread and butter so to speak. Please consider joining us and helping us provide even greater services to the people living with ALS in our provinces. [www.alswalkstrong.ca](http://www.alswalkstrong.ca)