



Mainstay Insurance Brokerage Inc. Phone: (905)886-9203

Share This with Your Employees BEFORE They Travel

In order to serve you better

To assist you with your employee benefit plan, we are continually updating our website. Located at:

www.mainstayinsurance.ca

The site provides easy access to many insurance company's websites and to the health and dental claim forms you utilize on a regular basis. We have also added links to the log on pages for members (employees) in order to provide quick access to other websites.

If you use a form that is not on our website and would like it added, please send us an e-mail at:

Dave@mainstayinsurance.ca

Did you know that...

...in June, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced that OHIP+ would no longer cover children under age 25 who had private insurance (such as your group benefit plan).

Going forward, your employer paid benefit plan will be the first payer once this change goes into effect. We understand that this will likely happen either March or April 1st, 2019.

This means that you may have to complete prior authorization forms with your insurer if your dependent child started on or continued using a specialty drug that was covered by the province over the past year.

If you encounter a problem, please call the insurer or us.

At your annual renewal meeting we review issues related to emergency medical travel coverage in order to ensure our clients are educated and aware of limitations that may exist in their group coverage.

Most important is the definition of **emergency** travel coverage. Many insurers define it as "an accident or injury or an **unforeseen illness** that **begins** while the insured is traveling". Plans also state that "any illness previously diagnosed or treated in Canada may not be covered".

Most travel coverage also includes a stability clause that excludes coverage for any medical issues that have changed or been treated in the 30 to 90 days before the date of travel.

WHAT DOES THIS REALLY MEAN?

These definitions may mean that you are **NOT** covered when you travel out of Canada if:

- You are in a high-risk pregnancy or beyond your 32nd -35th week of pregnancy
- You have recently had or are scheduled to have surgery or treatment for a medical condition
- It has been suggested that you have, are scheduled for or are awaiting a test, or test results
- Your physician would say

or has said that you are not medically stable or safe to travel

- You have had recent changes to medication, or it has been recommended that you do so; or it is recommended that you start on a new medication or treatment even a change in dosage for the same medication could qualify as such a change.

It is important to note that you may still be covered for other illnesses or injuries that are **NOT** in any way related to your pre-existing condition.

Another issue that can be problematic if a travel claim is the requirement to contact the carrier **immediately** when treatment is required. This is a key requirement, as many plans will **NOT** pay if not immediately notified of a medical issue.

When an individual seeks medical attention in a foreign country (including the US) they typically provide their insurance information and are assured that the hospital will "take care of everything". This **DOES NOT** mean that the hospital will contact the insurer on your behalf. In fact, the hospital may intentionally NOT contact the insurer in an effort to run additional tests. Some insurers specifically state

that they will not pay for any PET/CAT, or MRI's unless they are pre-authorized for this very reason. Some insurers will also not pay a claim for an emergency incurred in a country or region for which the Canadian government has issued either an "avoid non-essential travel" or "avoid all travel" warning.

What can you do to ensure that you have proper medical coverage in place when you travel?

1. Ensure you are in good, stable health and are not traveling against doctor's orders.
2. Take your OHIP card, travel insurance card and plan brochure with you when you travel.
3. Call the insurer the moment an event arises. Do not wait for a hospital or clinic to do so.
4. Check the website <http://www.voyage.gc.ca/>

In our annual renewal package, we include brochures describing your travel coverage, and how to access it, and general claim information including plan limitations. If you would like a pdf copy sent to you please e-mail us at: dave@mainstayinsurance.ca



Mainstay Insurance Brokerage Inc.

10 Linton Court
Thornhill, Ontario
L3T 5M9

PHONE:
(905) 886-9203

TOLL FREE:
1-877-624-6789
1-877-MAINSTY

FAX:
(905) 707-0216

E-MAIL:
inquiries@mainstayinsurance.ca

WEBSITE:
Mainstayinsurance.ca

Note: This side of the newsletter is intended for you the plan administrator. The information on the 'front' is targeted more to your staff and can be copied and distributed for their reference.

Just in case you were wondering...

...Mainstay Insurance has paid for our clients to have HR resources at no charge to you our clients.

The toolkit features a collection of [20 HR Kits](#) and [200+ premium templates](#) to make managing your people easier.

If you're interested in accessing these resources, just call us for your discount code, then visit:

<https://bit.ly/2Qd1PfY>

This information is provided as a reference to clients of Mainstay Insurance Brokerage Inc. It is not intended as advice. Your situation and the contract provided by your insurer as well as any relevant legislation shall always take precedence. Always obtain appropriate legal, human resource or accounting advice.

Are you cost sharing with staff? Learn about Box 85

Do you share the cost of your benefit plan (by payroll deduction) with your employees?

Employees who share the cost of their **health and dental premium** are entitled to claim their contribution amount on their annual tax return.

The portion deducted from employees should be reported annually in box 85 on your employees T4.

The following is information on this directly from the CRA website.

"If you make contributions to a private health services plan (such as medical or dental plans) for employees,

there is no taxable benefit to the employees.

Employee-paid premiums to a private health services plan are considered qualifying medical expenses and can be claimed by the employee on his or her income tax and benefit return.

Do not deduct CPP contributions, EI premiums, or income tax from benefits you provide to employees under private health services plans.

Include the amount that the employee paid on a T4 slip in the "Other

information" area under code **85**. The use of code **85** is optional. If you do not enter code **85**, we may ask the employee to provide supporting documents."

Employer paid premiums under a private health services plan are not taxable; do not report this benefit on a T4 slip.

More information is available on the CRA site at; <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/bnfts/hlth/prvt-eng.html>

Please ensure you pass this information on to your payroll firm or accounting department.

Taxable benefit reporting on T-4's

A reminder as we enter tax season that employer paid taxable benefits must be shown on employee T-4's.

Life, AD&D, Dependent life, Critical Illness and Long-Term Disability (LTD) premiums that are **employer**

paid must be shown as taxable benefits. Where employees pay the costs, this is a non-issue

In the case of employer paid benefits for Quebec staff, all employer paid

premiums are taxable benefits and must be reported (even health and dental).

Questions? Check with your accountant or give us a call.

My next sailing adventure

As many of you know, I am an avid sailor and have been doing so since I was a child. I find my time at sea a great opportunity to "reset" and although not always a "vacation", it provides a certain level of peace.

We have a boat that we sail in Lake Ontario ([often with clients and associates](#)) in the summer, and often take sailing vacations in the Caribbean in the winter. Every now and then I squeeze an extra special trip into my calendar and will be

doing so with my first Atlantic crossing in January. This passage is a distance of approximately 2,150 Nautical Miles (or 4,000 km) and will take about 17 days.

The passage departs from [Mindelo, São Vicente](#) (Cape Verde – off the coast of Africa) on January 22, 2019. We sail westward with the trade winds and are scheduled to arrive in [Le Marin](#),

[Martinique](#) around February 5.

I will be sailing with [John Kretschmer](#) aboard Quetzal, a [47 foot Kaufman Cutter](#) with a crew of 6.

Information will be sent prior to my departure for back-up contacts during my absence (there is no easy communication mid ocean). If you'd like to follow our progress, this [site](#) will track our journey.