



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

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 entry 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...

The MedsCheck program was launched on April 1, 2007. It is designed for Ontarians taking a minimum of three medications for a chronic condition. MedsCheck is a one-on-one 30 minute annual appointment with a pharmacist to review medications and help a patient better understand their medication therapy and to ensure that medications are taken as prescribed. There is no cost to the patient.

The program was expanded in 2010 and now also reaches residents of Ontario who are living with diabetes and those who are home-bound and not able to attend their community pharmacy for the service.

From: MOH<C website

Please Read this BEFORE you Travel !

Each year we review the issues around emergency medical travel coverage in order to make clients aware of the limitations that exist in every plan (both group and individual).

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". They go on to further clarify, stating "any illness previously diagnosed or treated in Canada may not be covered". Firms such as Manulife, Desjardins and Equitable have also added a stability clause that excludes from coverage medical issues that have changed or been treated from 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:

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

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

5. 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 different dosage could qualify as a change.

It is important to note that your out of country coverage may still be in effect for other illnesses and injuries that are **NOT** in any way related to your pre-existing condition.

The second item that can cause a problem is the requirement to contact carriers immediately when treatment is required. This is significant, as many plans will **NOT** pay if they are not notified immediately of a medical issue.

Often when someone seeks medical attention in a foreign country (this includes the US) they 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. In fact, they may intentionally NOT contact them in an effort to run additional and possibly unnecessary tests. Some insurers specifically state that they will not pay for any PET/CAT, or MRI's unless pre-authorized.

Some insurers will 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 are going to 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 and travel insurance card and 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/>
5. When traveling, consider the use of a service such as Canada Direct (1-800-561-8868).

This provides a local phone number that you can call from most countries to contact Canada. This is done with an English-speaking operator and allows services such as collect calling and third party billing.

Call or visit their web site at infocanadadirect.com



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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...

The YSM Evergreen Dinners for street youth that we have supported over the last 12 years continue to operate and are sold out again this year with volunteers buying and preparing over 150 dinners each year. We assist both YSM and the Broad Reach Foundation with annual financial contributions on behalf of our clients. Thank you for making that possible. Happy Holidays !

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.

T-4's Correct? 2013 Tax Changes Applied?

Each year at your plans renewal we review some of the taxation issues that impact your benefit plan. Your accountant or bookkeeper may also raise these issues.

To ensure that issues are dealt with in a timely manner, we also continue to include an annual reminder in this newsletter. This is not intended to offer advice but simply to remind you to discuss tax issues with your accountant to ensure that your situation is handled in the most appropriate manner.

As a result of changes in the 2012 federal budget, any contributions made by

employers to group sickness and accident plans will change the status to a **TAXABLE** benefit. Both Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) plans and Critical Illness (CI) plans are the benefits directly affected.

The above noted change is similar to the taxation of employee and dependent life insurance that is employer paid. It is also a taxable benefit in all provinces and ALL amounts must be shown on your employee's T-4. If your employee pays the premium for these benefits then this is not an issue. Long-term disability

premiums paid by the employer are generally NOT a taxable benefit but the actual disability benefits WILL be taxed at the time they are received. An alternative may be to have your employees contribute 100% of this cost of the premium through the year, to maintain a tax-free benefit for them should a disability claim be approved and the benefits received. The tax bulletin **IT-428** can provide information on how to best handle this benefit.

Health and dental premiums (including Health Care Spending Accounts) are a taxable benefit to Quebec employees only.

Commission Disclosure

At renewal each year we provide our clients with our disclosure documents. These confirm that we are acting as your broker and outline how we are compensated.

In most cases our commission is based on a sliding scale that reduces from 10% and is based on your plans annualized premium. Some plans may utilize higher scales and no bonuses, others

utilize lower. Some such as health spending accounts pay approximately 4-6% of your paid claims. Regardless of the insurer, they all result in a similar total amount being paid.

We continue to use the standard commission scales and are in fact compensated lower than many brokers who use flat 15% scales or even higher. We offer our clients excellent service

and by specializing in the area of employee benefits, we do more to protect our clients from potential areas of liability. We do NOT bill on a "fee for service" basis so you will never get a bill just for calling us with your questions.

We believe in full disclosure with clients. If you would ever like to discuss our compensation model, please feel free to give us a call.