

PlanTalk

VOLUME 7

SPRING, 2002

Basic and Enhanced Group Healthcare

Premium Increases

The HEBP Board has approved rate increases, *effective June 1, 2002* to Basic and Enhanced Group Healthcare premiums as follows. Retiree Group Healthcare rates will remain at current levels.

PLAN	MONTHLY PREMIUMS BEFORE INCREASE		MONTHLY PREMIUMS EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, 2002	
	Single	Family	Single	Family
Basic Group Healthcare	\$8.90	\$21.35	\$9.25	\$22.10
Enhanced Group Healthcare	\$18.50	\$47.10	\$23.15	\$58.90
Retiree Level I Group Healthcare	\$6.25	\$10.95	No Change	No Change
Retiree Level II Group Healthcare	\$22.50	\$36.55	No Change	No Change

*For members participating in the BlueNet POS Drug Card option, \$2.00 per month will continue to be added to the above premiums.

The rate increases are necessary to offset the increased total of claims paid in 2001, compared to 2000. If you require further information, please contact HEBP at (204) 942-6591 or toll free at 1-888-842-4233 or 1-877-567-4996.

Increase in Total Claims Paid Plus Expenses

Total Claims Paid Plus Expenses	2000	2001
Basic Group Healthcare	\$1,389,608	\$1,400,468
Enhanced Group Healthcare	\$4,626,212	\$5,859,217

2001 Basic & Enhanced Group Healthcare Experience

Premiums Plus Interest	\$6,237,847
Claims Paid Plus Expenses	\$7,259,685
Gain/Loss	\$(1,021,838)

Board Member Profile



"Our members focus on delivering healthcare to Manitobans and deserve to have the best benefits available within the resources," says HEBP Board Chair Bob Romphf.

"HEBP currently provides most of Manitoba's healthcare facilities with benefits plans. Partnered with HEPP, we are one of the few plans in Canada offering a wide range of group benefits coverage and pension benefits under one roof."

Plan membership increased for all HEBP active and retiree plans in 2001. "HEBP's membership is growing and we look forward to an exciting and strong future," says Bob.

"We are committed to providing benefits plans that meet members' coverage needs and keeping plan costs reasonable. With benefits and disability claims increasing due to an aging population, HEBP will continue to concentrate on efficient administration and service to members."

The Board's recent decision to self-administer the LTD Plan (*see story on page 2*) will maximize resources and provide earlier intervention and improved return to work initiatives. "We will offer more effective rehabilitation programs along with higher quality disability claims administration, and can respond to member needs faster and with more sensitivity. This will allow for the best use of plan funds."

Elected Chair of the HEBP Board of Trustees in September 2001, Bob is a charter member of the Board and previously chaired the Board in 1999. He served as the Board's vice chair when it was established in 1998, and again in 2000. Bob is a member of and has previously chaired the HEPP Board of Trustees, and serves as a joint chair for the Joint Healthcare Employees Employee Assistance Plan. Prior to the establishment of HEPP/HEBP, Bob served as a member and first union chair of the St. Boniface General Hospital / Unions Jointly Trusteed Pension Plan.

As the Labor Relations Officer – Benefits at the Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU), Bob represents MNU on pension and benefit issues and implements workplace safety and health issues. He also teaches pension and benefit issues to others across North America through the International Foundation of Employee Benefits Plans and sits on the Manitoba Council of Healthcare Unions.

PlanTalk, a newsletter for employees and retirees participating in the Healthcare Employees Pension and Benefits Plans, is published by:

HEPP/HEBP Manitoba
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Winnipeg, MB R3C 4L5
Website: www.hepp.mb.ca or www.hebp.mb.ca

Highlights... In This Issue

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Please see insert for a summary of HEBP Travel Healthcare benefits.

Welcome!

A number of facilities have joined HEPP/HEBP since fall and are participating in one or more plans:

- Central Medical Labs
- Home Care Nurses
- Seniors Access to Independent Living
- The College of Midwives of Manitoba

The continuing expansion of participating facilities means increased portability of pension and benefits for our members throughout Manitoba.

The Inside Story

On Benefits

Long Term Disability Plan

Administration Change

Following a comprehensive review, the Healthcare Employees Benefits Plan (HEBP) Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that the HEBP Long Term Disability (LTD) Plan will become fully self-insured and self-administered, effective June 1, 2002.

In response to ongoing concerns from employers, members, claimants and unions about the LTD Plan, a sub-committee was appointed by the HEBP Board in 1999 to review all aspects of the existing plan including:

- Management and service issues
- Claims processing, and
- Turn around times.

It was confirmed that bringing the LTD Plan in-house provides significant advantages and opportunities to manage it in a more efficient, responsive and accountable manner, as HEBP will be able to:

- Exercise appropriate prudence and care in managing plan funds
- Respond to claimants faster and with more sensitivity
- Provide timely, equitable resolution of claims and higher quality disability claims management
- Promote, plan and direct early intervention, rehabilitation and return to work programs, and
- Reduce expenses through improved administration.

Changes and Improvements

Any claims incurred *on or after June 1, 2002* will be assessed by HEBP's in-house claim specialists, and HEBP's rehabilitation coordinator will direct rehabilitation programs for disabled plan members.

As plan costs continue to increase, the Board had to determine how to contain these costs. A significant premium increase, in excess of 20%, would have been necessary to fund the Plan - however to avoid passing this increase on to employers and members, the Board made an important decision to modify benefit duration periods under the Plan.

Therefore, for claims incurred on or after June 1, 2002, disability benefits will be paid while the member is disabled:

- Until the age at which the member qualifies for an unreduced pension under HEPP, or
- For 12 months, if the member is eligible for an unreduced pension when their disability commences.

Employee premiums for Group Life Insurance, Healthcare and Dental Benefits (if applicable) will continue to be waived during periods that a member qualifies for disability benefits, until they reach age 65.

Information regarding this change will be added to plan booklets and fact sheets. Members, employers and unions will be informed if there are any other changes to policies and procedures.

The name of the LTD Plan will change to *HEBP Disability & Rehabilitation Plan* to reflect its positive features. HEBP will be working towards reducing the amount of time that employees are unable to attend work because of an illness or injury by introducing early intervention and return to work programs.

As the Disability & Rehabilitation Plan is designed to be a collaborative program, we hope employers and employees will contact us at any time with comments or suggestions, or for more information.

Note: There will be no changes for members receiving LTD benefits *prior to June 1, 2002*. These claims will continue to be processed by the current insurer (Manulife Financial).

This article is for information purposes only, and does not constitute an agreement. If there is a discrepancy between this article and the Disability and Rehabilitation Plan Text, the terms of the Plan text will prevail.

Dental & Group Healthcare

Coordinating Benefits With More Than One Plan

Many families and individuals with coverage under more than one dental or group healthcare plan are able to coordinate benefits. For example, if one plan pays 80% of a claim, the other plan may pay the remaining 20% of the claim.

Coordination of Benefits is a claim procedure developed by the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association to ensure that individuals with coverage under two or more plans receive the full compensation they are entitled to and that claims are paid by the correct plan.

Employees should submit their own claims (expenses pertaining to them) to the plan where they are the subscriber or cardholder first. Any remaining balance can then be sent to the other plan for payment with a copy of the receipt and explanation of benefits from the first plan.

If you are covered by more than one plan, claims should be submitted in the following order of priority:

1. The plan where you are an active full-time employee
2. The plan where you are an active part-time employee
3. The plan where you are a retiree

For dependent children who are covered under two plans, the claim should be submitted to the plan of the parent whose birthday comes first in the calendar year. For example, if the father's birthday is in February and the mother's birthday is in April, the claim should be submitted to the father's plan first, and any remaining balance should be submitted to the mother's plan.

When parents are separated or divorced, claims should be submitted in the following order of priority:

1. The plan of the parent with custody of the child
2. The plan of the spouse of the parent with custody of the child
3. The plan of the parent not having custody of the child
4. The plan of the spouse of the parent not having custody of the child

Note: Please refer to the Spring 2001 issue of PlanTalk for information on coordinating benefits with two point of sale (POS) plans (where prescription drug costs can be billed directly by the Pharmacy to the insurer).

If you need assistance in determining the order to submit claims, please contact the Manitoba Blue Cross Information Service Center at (204) 775-0151 or toll-free at 1-800-873-2583.

Dental Plan Premium Increases

Effective April 1, 2002, Dental Plan premiums increased to \$10.70 from \$10.08 for single coverage. Family coverage increased to \$31.25 from \$29.48.

The increase was necessary to offset the Manitoba Dental Fee Guide adjustment and the rise in claims paid.

If you require further information, please contact HEBP.

PlanView

You can view PlanView, HEPP/HEBP's orientation video, on our website at: www.hepp.mb.ca or www.hebp.mb.ca

The video was introduced last year to help inform new healthcare employees about their pension and benefits plans and to assist employers with enrollment and orientation.

You may also contact your employer to view your facility's copy of the video.

The Inside Story

On Pension



Portability Options

Transferring Funds Between Pension Plans

HEPP allows for pension funds to be *transferred in* from other registered pension plans offered through a member's previous employer, and *transferred out* to other registered pension plans offered through a new employer.

The two most common types of transfers are:

1. Reciprocal Transfers

When HEPP has a reciprocal agreement with another pension plan, reciprocal transfers, *normally based on actuarially determined amounts*, are allowed between the plans. A reciprocal agreement is an arrangement where two, similarly structured pension plans agree to a two-way transfer of their members' pension values, normally based on actuarially determined amounts.

2. Direct Commuted Value Transfers

HEPP now allows direct commuted value transfers in and out of the plan if there is no reciprocal agreement in place. Generally, commuted transfer values are *lower* than they would be under a reciprocal agreement arrangement, as they are *based on the member's contributory service and annualized earnings to date*. These transfers can only be completed if the other plan agrees to the transfer.

When transferring pension funds, basic eligibility requirements must be met. Whether a reciprocal agreement is in place or not, when transferring funds into HEPP, they must be transferred directly from the other pension plan. Funds *cannot* be transferred to HEPP from a Locked In Retirement Account (LIRA), also known as a Locked in Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP).

Transferring funds between pension plans may affect the amount you can contribute to RRSPs. For more information on tax implications, please contact a tax advisor.

Reciprocal agreements are currently in place between HEPP and the following plans:

- B.C. Public Service Pension Plan
- B.C. Municipal Pension Plan
- Brandon University Retirement Plan
- Civil Service Superannuation Board
- CUPE Pension Plan Trust Fund
- Public Service Pension Fund
- The Employee Benefits Board of the City of Winnipeg
- The Joint Board of Trustees of the Municipal Employees Pension Plan
- The Retirement Plan for Employees of the St. James-Assiniboia School Division No. 2
- The Retirement Plan for Employees of the United Way of Winnipeg & Participating Affiliated Agencies
- The Public Service Superannuation Plan of the Province of New Brunswick
- The Pension Plan for Certain Bargaining Employees of New Brunswick Hospitals
- The Pension Plan for CUPE Employees of New Brunswick Hospitals
- The Pension Plan for Officers and Employees (other than teachers) of the Winnipeg School Division No. 1

Buybacks

Service Purchase Maximums

Buybacks allow members to purchase eligible periods of missed credited service, such as maternity leaves and other unpaid leaves of absence, to increase their pension benefits.

When buying back service from periods on or after January 1, 1992, the period can not exceed five years.

For maternity leaves and other leaves of absence related to periods of parenting, as defined in the Income Tax Act:

- Buybacks can not exceed 12 months for any one period of parenting, *and*
- The cumulative period a member may buy back for periods of parenting can not exceed 36 months.

For more information on buybacks and periods that are eligible for buybacks, please see the insert in the Fall 2001 issue of PlanTalk, or contact HEPP.

Reminder

HEPP Annual General Meeting

HEPP's annual general meeting will take place on Monday, June 17, 2002 from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

The meeting at the Centro Caboto Centre Auditorium, 1055 Wilkes Avenue, is open to members.

Member Feedback

Readership Survey

Your responses to the following questions will help us address your needs in future issues of PlanTalk. Please send your responses by mail, fax or e-mail to:

PlanTalk HEPP/HEBP Manitoba 900-200 Graham Avenue Winnipeg, MB R3C 4L5
Fax: (204) 943-3862 E-mail: communications@hepp.mb.ca

Completed surveys will be entered into a draw for a Wow Hospitality restaurant gift certificate.

1. Please rank the following regular PlanTalk features:

Inside Story on Benefits

Very Informative Somewhat Informative Not Informative Don't read this feature

Inside Story On Pension

Very Informative Somewhat Informative Not Informative Don't read this feature

Member Feedback

Very Good Good Dislike this feature Don't read this feature

Board Member Profiles

Very Good Good Dislike this feature Don't read this feature

HEPP/HEBP Employee Profiles

Very Good Good Dislike this feature Don't read this feature

HEPP/HEBP Member Profiles

Very Good Good Dislike this feature Don't read this feature

Retiree Corner

Very Good Good Dislike this feature Don't read this feature

From the Boardroom

Very Good Good Dislike this feature Don't read this feature

2. What other features or information would you like to see in PlanTalk?

3. Do you like the style and format of PlanTalk?

Yes No Comments: _____

4. Do you keep PlanTalk newsletters? Yes Sometimes No

5. How easy is it to read and understand the information in PlanTalk?

Very Easy Somewhat Easy Difficult

6. Do you have internet access? Yes No

7. Have you ever visited the HEPP/HEBP website? Yes No

If yes, did you view PlanTalk newsletters on the website? Yes No

Did you view HEPP/HEBP Annual Reports on the website? Yes No

8. (Optional) Please check boxes that are applicable to you to help us identify trends in the feedback we receive.

Active Member (occupation: _____)

Retiree Deferred Member HEPP/HEBP Employee or Board Member

Union Representative Facility/Employer Contact RHA Contact

Provincial H.R. Council Contact Other: _____

Thank you for your feedback. To be entered in the draw please provide:

Your Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Employee Profile



As HEPP/HEBP's communications coordinator, Vanessa Sired coordinates the creation, production and distribution of plan information.

"I focus on providing information to members, employers and unions and keeping them informed about plan changes and issues," says Vanessa. "This is done through a full range of communications including newsletters, annual reports, information booklets, annual statements, fact sheets, an employer manual, the video and website."

Vanessa organized the production of the PlanView orientation video last year. "The video combines an overview of information about the Pension and Benefits Plans with footage of members and HEPP/HEBP employees, putting a human face on the Plans and our membership."

To Vanessa, two-way communication is an important part of improving service and providing members and employers with information they need. "Feedback helps us identify, address and communicate needs and concerns," she says. "We look forward to receiving feedback on PlanTalk newsletters through the survey in this issue."

"Research, planning and input from Board members, management and staff helps ensure

that communication is complete, accurate and cost-effective," says Vanessa. "Utilizing the website and e-mail also reduces costs of printing and mailing."

HEPP/HEBP's website at www.hepp.mb.ca or www.hebp.mb.ca contains plan information, forms, publications, investment information, a list of participating employers and a link to the orientation video.

"I enjoy working on the website because it's an interactive medium," says Vanessa. "Current information can be added instantly and linked together so that it's easy to find."

Vanessa began working at HEPP/HEBP in 2000. Prior to this, she gained diverse experience as a communications consultant.

As a Creative Communications graduate, Vanessa is trained in writing, design and public relations. She is also trained in photography, video production and website development and is a member of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

After a day of proofreading and editing, Vanessa likes to go for a walk, run, golf or read a novel. She says, "I enjoy the simple things the most – my family, home and garden."

Member Profile



As the assistant supervisor of maintenance at The Middlechurch Home of Winnipeg, Don McCallum is a licensed building systems technician, power engineer and fire marshal, and manages all mechanical aspects of the building.

"The residents at Middlechurch have always been my top priority," says Don. "Middlechurch is their home, and I always take them into consideration by treating them with dignity and respect."

Don began working at Middlechurch in December 1973 as a power engineer. He is entitled to receive an unreduced pension in August this year when he reaches Magic 80 - his age plus years of employment service will total 80.

"The support of everyone in my department makes my job easier," he says. "And I look forward to working with them for a while longer."

Don has decided to return to work in retirement and receive his monthly pension benefits at the same time. As members cannot receive monthly HEPP pension benefits and contribute to HEPP

at the same time, Don will waive his right to participate in and contribute to HEPP.

When he returns to work, Don will participate in the Benefits Plans for active members. When he stops working at Middlechurch, he will be able to enrol in Retiree Group Healthcare and Post Retirement Insurance.

"It's good to know my wife and I have secure pension and benefits. With a joint life form of pension, my wife will receive a lifetime pension benefit if anything were to happen to me."

In planning for retirement, Don referred to his annual statements and requested pension estimates from HEPP. "Annual statements and estimates helped us calculate the income we would have in retirement. We also got information and answers to our questions from the Member Services Representatives (MSRs) at HEPP – I can't thank them enough."

"I'm looking forward to having more time to work in the yard, spending time with my family and traveling once I retire," says Don.

Retiree Corner

HSC Retiree Association

The Health Sciences Centre (HSC) Retiree Association provides a means for fellowship and communication of issues that affect retirees. Benefits and other issues affecting HSC retirees are discussed at luncheon meetings and social functions are held. The association also invites speakers to discuss topics of interest to retirees and provides information on seniors' services.

Meetings: Four times per year
Location: Community Services Building
685 William Avenue
Contact: Kay Douglas, President
(204) 256-8570

St. Boniface General Hospital Retiree Association

The St. Boniface General Hospital (SBGH) Retiree Association provides informational luncheon meetings followed by entertainment and supports SBGH activities and plans. At meetings, opportunities to increase the welfare and well being of retirees are discussed. Sometimes, presentations are made on benefits, other issues affecting retirees and resources for retirees. The association also sponsors social events and organizes social activities.

Meetings: Three times per year
Location: Norwood Hotel
112 Marion Street
Contact: Grace Lawrence, President
(204) 255-3600

If your retiree association would like to be mentioned in Retiree Corner, please phone (204) 942-6598 ext. 238, or e-mail: communications@hepp.mb.ca

From the Boardroom

Board Changes

Resigning from the HEPP Board of Trustees is John Irvine, a founding trustee of the Plan. Many thanks and best wishes to John in retirement, and on the golf course.



HEBP TRAVEL HEALTHCARE BENEFITS SUMMARY

Travel Healthcare benefits are provided to active members of the Basic and Enhanced Group Healthcare Plans and their eligible dependents.

When you travel on regular vacation or business, the Plan provides 100% coverage for emergency treatment due to an accident or sickness, and includes benefits for hospital, medical and related expenses following an accident or sickness outside your province of residence.

Should you or your dependents require medical care, MEDEX, Blue Cross's International Travel Assist Program can be reached 24 hours daily at the phone numbers on the back of your Blue Cross card. A Travel Health claim form must be completed and sent to Blue Cross with itemized receipts. It is usually not necessary to submit claims to Manitoba Health. Eligible claims are payable in Canadian funds at the conversion rate in effect when the claim was incurred.

BENEFITS COVERED	MAXIMUMS / RESTRICTIONS
In-patient and out-patient hospital charges	
Private duty nursing during or following hospitalization	By a professional nurse, not related to patient; when recommended by physician
Medical and surgical services by legally qualified physicians	Routine medical expenses are not covered (for example, a general examination or "check-up")
Ambulance charges from the place of illness/accident to the nearest hospital	
Economy air transportation by stretcher, to your home city in Canada, if hospitalized as an in-patient	
Additional cost, if any, of economy air travel from where you are hospitalized as an in-patient to your home city in Canada	
Cost of return economy air travel for a professional nurse, if required on a flight home	A letter supporting this benefit is required from the attending physician
Cost of return economy air travel if your family (spouse and dependent children) or one traveling companion has to return as well	Traveling companion must also be covered by a Blue Cross Travel Health Plan
Board/lodging costs incurred by a relative or friend remaining with you during hospitalization as an in-patient following the original duration of your trip	Relative/friend must be traveling with you and covered by a Blue Cross Travel Health Plan
Cost to transport a spouse or any one parent, child, brother or sister to your bedside if you are hospitalized as an in-patient for at least 7 days outside your province of residence	\$1,000 maximum for round trip economy air fare; letter from physician required to verify need for visit
Transportation charges for a family member to identify the deceased prior to release of the body	If required by law; \$1,000 maximum for round trip economy air fare
Medical evacuation to a hospital in your province of residence	Subject to the discretion of Blue Cross
Air ambulance charges	Should serious illness or injury occur
\$40 per day allowance during hospitalization as an in-patient for incidental costs such as parking, telephone calls, taxis etc.	\$1,000 maximum
Physiotherapy	Must be provided in a hospital
Emergency Chiropractic and Podiatrist/Chiropodist services	A letter is required from the attending practitioner certifying that services were for acute care
Prescription drugs	Vitamins, vitamin preparations and over the counter drugs are not covered
Dental treatment for natural teeth following a direct, accidental blow to the mouth	\$1,000 maximum per accident for services within 180 days following the accident
Emergency treatment for relief of dental pain when outside your province of residence	\$300 maximum; dentist's letter is required indicating treatment was necessary to relieve acute pain not present before departure
In the event of loss of life, up to \$3,000 towards the cost of transporting the deceased to their home city in Canada, or up to \$1,500 for cremation or burial at place of death	
Blood or blood plasma	If not free of charge from Red Cross
Repair or replacement of eyeglasses or contact lenses due to an accident or injury	Injury must be treated by a physician; \$100 maximum
Expenses for the return of your vehicle if you are unable to drive	\$500 maximum

Please note:

Retired employees are not covered.

Members on an approved leave of absence who have prepaid Group Healthcare premiums are covered, however the duration of the trip is subject to a maximum of 90 days. If the trip exceeds 90 days, the coverage will be invalid for the entire trip. You should arrange individual travel health coverage for trips that will exceed 90 days.

Anyone attending school on a full-time basis outside of Canada is not covered.

Services will not be covered if a trip outside your province of residence is taken for the purpose of receiving medical or hospital services, whether or not recommended by a physician.

If treatment or surgery is not for the relief of acute pain or suffering, or can be reasonably delayed (on medical evidence) until your return home, it will not be covered.

If pregnant and traveling after the 36th week of pregnancy, any expenses associated with childbirth or delivery will not be covered.

Services due to riot, war, or hostilities by any armed force (whether war is declared or not) are not covered.

This article is intended to assist you in understanding the terms and conditions of HEBP Travel Healthcare Benefits, and does not constitute an agreement. Please contact Manitoba Blue Cross at (204) 775-0151 or toll free at 1-800-873-2583 (within Manitoba) or 1-888-596-1032 (within Canada) for exact conditions or if you require more information.