

## Chambers Plan Renewal **April 1, 2020**

April 1<sup>st</sup> marks the annual renewal of your Chambers Plan coverage. At renewal, premiums are adjusted for the coming year to reflect changes in individuals' ages, adjustments to provincial Dental Fee Guides, costs associated with medical trends, and any revisions to government health plans. This edition of **Plan News** highlights these changes for you.

Renewal rates are calculated based on the current demographics and evolving composition of Plan participants of your group. Though there are no across-the-board increases in Life, Disability or Critical Illness base rates, individuals joining or leaving your firm during the past year can affect the rates charged to all participants in your firm for the coming year.

Your firm's **Employee Benefit and Premium Summary** reflects your rates at April 1, 2020, based on your current coverage, and can be accessed on Chambers Plan's online administration platform under [my-benefits.ca/My Plan/Tools & Reports](https://my-benefits.ca/MyPlan/Tools&Reports).

This 2020 summary also includes your Chambers Plan advisor's contact information. Your advisor is a valuable source of information and knowledge who can work with you to find the ideal balance of cost coverage and flexibility for your firm's unique needs. So, whether you would like to review your current coverage, or address changing budget or coverage needs, your advisor is ready to help.

### One Year Older

On April 1<sup>st</sup> each year, the ages for all insureds enrolled in the Plan are adjusted, with each Plan participant becoming one year older. Since the cost of some of the benefits (e.g. Life and Disability) increase as Plan participants age, rates will be adjusted to reflect the current ages of all Plan participants.



**RENEWAL RATES ARE BASED ON  
THE CURRENT DEMOGRAPHICS  
OF YOUR GROUP.**

Continued...

## Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Sometimes personal and work-related issues can affect an employee's performance. Chambers Plan EAP provides for in-person counselling on family challenges, work related difficulties, personal problems, dependency concerns, and eldercare issues. It also provides support by phone for legal issues, financial struggles, childcare options, and nutritional counselling.

Chambers Plan has witnessed increased utilization of the EAP benefit as more employees reach out for help. This trend is undeniably positive, suggesting the stigma around mental health concerns is fading. However, it simultaneously impacts the sustainability of the very benefits in place to provide the help. In order to maintain the quality of this valuable benefit and keep it affordable, the Plan has reduced the maximum number of annual hours covered from 12 down to 8.

An EAP can have a positive impact on your business and your employees. Recent research shows that individuals who stop working for mental health reasons were more likely to return to work during, or shortly after, completion of their EAP-provided counselling, and were more than three times less likely to file a Long Term Disability claim. They also reported reduced prescription drug claims.

If your coverage doesn't include an EAP component, your advisor can show you how affordable it is to support the well-being of your employees.



## Optional Life Insurance

Optional Life insurance provides employees the opportunity to purchase more Life coverage at low group rates, to reflect their individual needs. We are pleased to advise, effective April 1, 2020, Chambers Plan Optional Life rates will be decreasing by approximately 10%. The rate reduction is shown on your *Employee Benefit and Premium Summary*, accessible on [my-benefits.ca](http://my-benefits.ca). A notification letter will also be sent directly to affected Plan members.



## Chambers Plan Advantage

Chambers Plan applies a pooled and partially-pooled approach to Health and Dental benefits to establish renewal rates. Small fluctuations in a firm's claims don't necessarily affect the rates. This allows firms a greater degree of latitude before their individual experience is considered, providing firms with greater rate stability.

Unlike most programs, Chambers Plan is run on a **not-for-profit** basis, and premiums are set to cover the cost of the Plan's benefits and administration. Surpluses in any of the benefits are used to offset deficits in more utilized benefits. This approach ensures all premiums are used for the benefit of **all** Plan participants.

The average increase for participating firms under Chambers Plan will be 5.1% at April 1<sup>st</sup>, demonstrating the Plan's continued commitment to rate stability. In fact, Chambers Plan's average renewal has been only 4.7% over the past 5 years, and 3.9% over the past 10 years. By choosing Chambers Plan, your firm has chosen a stable and predictable group program that can grow with your organization.

Continued...



## Age-Based Coverage Changes

With all ages recalculated at April 1<sup>st</sup>, some Plan participants' current age will affect their benefits. For example:

- Life options under Chambers Plan reduce to 25% or 50% of face value at age 65 and terminate at age 75. Individuals turning 65 can convert to a personal plan, in whole or in part, the coverage they are losing under the Plan. Letters are sent directly to individuals, notifying them of the opportunity to convert and the time frame for doing so (31 days from April 1<sup>st</sup>).
- Weekly Indemnity and Long Term Disability benefits terminate **on** the Plan participant's **65th** birthday. Critical Illness benefits terminate on the Plan's anniversary **following** a Plan participant's **65th** birthday. Life, Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D), Dependent Life, and EAP benefits, as well as access to Best Doctors<sup>®</sup> services, terminate on the Plan's anniversary date **following** a Plan participant's **75th** birthday. Health and Dental benefits can continue until April 1<sup>st</sup> **following** a participant's **80th** birthday.
- Travel coverage duration under any Health option for an insured and any dependent is based on the age of the certificate holder as at April 1<sup>st</sup>. Plan participants should refer to their booklets for details on the maximum trip duration under their Plan to see how an age change may affect their coverage.

## Insurer Name Change

The Critical Illness benefit under Chambers Plan is insured by Western Life Assurance Company. Effective January 1, 2020, The Wawanesa Life Insurance Company and Western Life amalgamated. They will continue as one company under the Wawanesa Life name and brand, as approved by the federal government's Minister of Finance. We will be amending our forms and booklet wording to reflect the change, however, since this is just a name change and coverage does not change, we will not be reissuing new booklets to insureds. Employee booklets are available to print on *my-benefits*<sup>®</sup>. If your firm holds Critical Illness coverage, and you would like a new booklet, please contact our office and we'll be happy to accommodate your request.

## RAMQ Dependent Eyeglass Coverage Clarification

The Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) has enacted a program that, for your **employees who are residents of Quebec**, reimburses up to \$250 per child for the cost of eyeglasses or contact lenses for dependent children under the age of 18. This program is retroactive to September 1, 2019. We erred in our initial understanding, stating eligibility for the reimbursement recurs 24 months after the date of payment, when, in fact, it recurs 24 months **after the purchase date**. For complete details, please visit the RAMQ site at <http://www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca/en/citizens/aid-programs/Pages/eyeglasses-lenses-children.aspx#ophthalmologist>  
RAMQ Dependent Eyeglass Coverage Clarification

## Annual Firm Update

In January, we sent you an *Annual Firm Update* form. By completing the document, you help us to ensure all your eligible employees are participating in the Plan and that our records reflect the most current information about them. We also asked for confirmation of your current email address. These details can be quickly and easily updated on *my-benefits.ca*. Alternatively, you may fill out the form and mail it to us. **If you did not receive the Annual Firm Update**, please contact the Service Centre immediately at 1 800 665-3365.

Continued...

## Plan Enhancements

Chambers Plan's sole purpose is to provide comprehensive employee group benefits to participating Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade members and their employees.

During the last Plan year, Chambers Plan was thrilled to announce a partnership with Teladoc Health, the global leader in virtual care. The **Teladoc® telemedicine service** helps members consult with a physician about non-urgent medical matters by video conference or by phone<sup>1</sup>, from wherever they are in Canada and the U.S., 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. During the visit, members can receive a diagnosis, treatment recommendation, and even be prescribed medicine when necessary. Every doctor is certified by the Canadian College of Family Physicians. All Plan members, and their dependents, who hold a Chambers Plan Extended Health option, **receive the service at no additional charge.**



<sup>1</sup>In Quebec, telemedicine services must be offered by video conference.

Also, a new benefit was added for business owners, **The Healthy Business Bookmark™, at no additional cost**, to Chambers Plan's Business Assistance Service (BAS). The HBB gives employers access to an online library of tools and information covering Human Resources and business management issues. Within sections on self-development, people management, and business essentials, you'll find articles, podcasts, checklists, sample documents, guides, and more. And it is freely accessible on *my-benefits.ca*.

Last year the Plan also:

- enhanced Best Doctors® to include **coverage for parents and parents-in-law at no additional cost** to plan members
- launched the redesigned *my-benefits.ca* online platform and *my-benefits* mobile application
- enhanced the *my-benefits* app to enable employees to submit prescription drug claims online

By selecting Chambers Plan, your firm has chosen a stable group program dedicated to providing comprehensive benefits and unmatched service. Thank you for choosing to be a member of your local Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade, and for choosing Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan®.