

November 2016 Bulletin from the H&W Trustees

The Trustees of the PPWC – Employer Trusteed Health & Welfare Plan met on October 17th and would like to update you on a number of items relating to your group benefit coverage.

Prior Authorization

Pacific Blue Cross (“PBC”) introduced their prior authorization program for certain specialty drugs effective April 18, 2016. The program is intended to help support the long term sustainability of the plan. Similar to a pre-authorization for major or orthodontic dental services, Pacific Blue Cross requires that you submit an application for certain classes of drugs before being automatically reimbursed under the plan. To start, three classes of drugs will be part of this program: PCSK9 inhibitors (e.g. Repatha to treat high cholesterol), Hepatitis C drugs, and Botulinum toxins (Botox™ and Xeomin™).

The Trustees wanted to let you know that additional drugs are being added to the prior authorization program and you may see more notices of these additions directly from PBC. New classes of drugs include: Severe asthma drugs (e.g. Nucala) and Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension drugs (e.g. Adcirca).

Surgery for Permanent Contraception

Desjardins has reviewed the practice for disabilities resulting from vasectomies, hysterectomies and other surgical sterilizations. As the disabilities resulting from these surgeries are not due to a sickness or accidental injury, weekly indemnity benefits are not payable. However, if a complication from the surgery occurs, such as an infection, time loss resulting from this complication may qualify for weekly indemnity benefits.

Financial Position of the Plan

PricewaterhouseCoopers has completed their audit of the PPWC – Employer Trusteed Health and Welfare Plan’s 2015 financial statements. The Plan continues to be fully funded and the statements will be shared with the local unions and participating employers when finalized.

Blue Advantage

Blue advantage is a program that allows Pacific Blue Cross members to save at point of sale on cost of medical, vision care and, many other products and services offered by participating providers across Canada. To participate, all you need to do is present your Pacific Blue Cross identification card to the provider and mention the Blue Advantage program. Please visit the Blue Advantage website at www.blueadvantage.ca for a list of participating providers and for more information about the program.

Travelling out of Province

We had noted that the discount for the medical travel plan was 20% in the July bulletin. PBC has recently advised that effective April 1, 2017 the discount to medical travel will be reduced to 10% for all group clients and members. Your current 20% discount will still be eligible until March 31, 2017.

Trustee meeting dates for 2017

The Trustees established their 2017 meeting dates as follows:

February 16, 2017

June 8, 2017

October 16, 2017