

## Chambers Plan Renewal **April 1, 2019**

April 1st 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.

In this package you will also find your firm's **Employee Benefit and Premium Summary**. The Summary is specific to your organization and reflects your rates as at April 1, 2019, based on your current coverage.

In the top right corner of your *Employee Benefit and Premium Summary*, you can find your advisor's contact information. Your advisor is a source of information and knowledge who can identify coverage solutions for your firm's unique needs. Whether it's simply to review your current coverage, or address budget or coverage needs, your advisor can help you choose options to best suit your company.

### One Year Older

At April 1st 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 increase as Plan participants age (e.g. Life and Disability), rates will be adjusted to reflect the current ages of all Plan participants.

Your 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.

**Renewal rates are based on the current demographics of your group.**



## Arive® Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

One in five Canadians are personally affected by mental illness each year, with issues ranging from severe conditions to more common afflictions including stress, anxiety and depression. These issues not only impact individuals and their families, they can impact employers and their group plans.

Chambers Plan has witnessed increased utilization of the EAP benefit as employees reach out for help. Two regions, British Columbia and Quebec, will see an increase in the monthly cost of their EAP coverage effective April 1st. Please refer to your *Employee Benefit and Premium Summary* for details.

Employee Assistance Programs are still a great way for employers to take proactive measures regarding their

employees' mental well-being. Arete Human Resources Inc. commissioned APAS Laboratories to conduct an independent research project investigating the effect of achieving problem resolution through the Arive® Employee Assistance Program on Long Term Disability (LTD) claim likelihood, and prescription drug and paramedical claim costs.

The research showed that Arive EAP had a positive impact. In the 12-month period following the completion of Arive EAP sessions, individuals returning to work during or shortly after completing their sessions, were 3.3 times less likely to file an LTD claim, and reported reduced prescription drug claims. If your coverage does not include an EAP component, your advisor can show you how little it costs to protect the mental well-being of your employees.

## Chambers Plan Advantage

Chambers Plan utilizes a pooled and partially pooled approach to Health and Dental benefits to establish renewal rates. Small fluctuations in a firm's claims do not 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 4.4% at April 1st, which is in line with previous increases. It highlights the Plan's continued commitment to rate stability, with the average renewal action being 4.0% over the last decade and only 4.4% over the last five years.



## Age-Based Coverage Changes

With all ages recalculated at April 1st, 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 age 65 can convert, 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 1st).
- 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 Employee Assistance Program benefits, as well as access to Best Doctors® services, terminate on the Plan's anniversary date **following** a Plan participant's **75th** birthday. Health and Dental benefits can continue until April 1st **following** their **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.



## Reminders

In order for Plan participants to be eligible for ANY benefits, they must be permanent, full-time employees working not less than 20 hours weekly.

To be eligible for Health benefits, individuals must be covered by their provincial or territorial health plan. Full-time employees who are eligible based on hours worked, but do NOT yet have provincial or territorial coverage, are eligible for all other benefits your firm may hold. Please ensure you enrol these individuals within the 120-day enrolment period to avoid them becoming a late entrant. When the individual is approved for provincial or territorial health coverage, they have 60 days to enrol for any Health benefits your firm may have.



## We're Here to Help

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. Over the past year, the Plan:

- enhanced Dependent Life coverage
- increased Overall and Non-Evidence Maximums, providing higher guaranteed Life and Disability benefits
- adjusted the Life Waiver provision, allowing individuals to apply for waiver of premium sooner when they become disabled

- enhanced Paramedical services to include coverage for kinesiotherapists and kinesiologists, and higher benefit limits for Athletic Therapy services.

By selecting Chambers Plan, your firm has chosen a stable group program that can grow with your organization. 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®.