

# BENE f acts

# for pensioners



**Christmas, 2000**

The Department of Pensions and Group Insurance

The United Church of Canada, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario, M8X 2Y4

## Penumbra ...Pension Staff

### Pension Plan Improvements

Once again a Valuation of the Pension Fund finds the Fund to be solvent and in a healthy surplus position. And once again the spendable surplus is being used for Plan improvements. By now you should have received a personal letter specific to your own pension increase. If not please contact one of the team members who relate to your Conference and we will send you a duplicate copy.

### Did you know...

- the Pension Fund sits in the top 100 pension funds in Canada
- that, with this update, the pensioners payroll will be close to \$40 million per year?



## Pro Claiming...Group Insurance Plan Staff

### Over 65 Life Insurance

A bit of good news: Most Retirees have a small life insurance policy in the amount of \$2,500. This benefit has been increased to \$3,000 and the change is effective on deaths that occur after December 31, 2000. You have this life insurance policy if you were age 55 or over and a Member of the Group Plan when you terminated or retired. The benefit remains premium free to you and remains a taxable benefit to you since the premium is paid by the Active Plan Employers. If you want to check to see if you have this life insurance, look at one of your T4A's from previous years. If it has a small amount entered in Box 28 'Other Income', you have the this life insurance. The amount entered in Box 28 is the amount of the premium on which you pay tax. **Please note: Surviving Spouses do not have this life insurance, only Retirees.**



The next sections apply only to those pensioners who are carrying Health and Dental insurance. The headings are in blue.

### Your Booklet -

#### The Group Benefits for Pensioners Plan

Alas, at last. This booklet is ready and as I write this I am awaiting its arrival in Church House. If it is not enclosed with this mailing, it will be sent under separate cover before year end. It replaces the several 8.5 x 11 versions you have received along the way and is more detailed.

### Comprehensive Dental Examination

Reimbursement for a comprehensive dental examination is once every 24 months. Dentists should probably not be conducting this

examination more frequently than this. This examination is different from the nine month recall and includes more X-rays etc. *In order to ensure reimbursement, ask your dentist what service will be performed, before the service is performed. If you are changing dentists, find out the date of your last comprehensive check-up before you go.*

### Breast Prosthesis Replacement

The Plan will now cover replacement of breast prosthesis on a 'reasonable and customary' basis.

### Removal of Cap on ED Drugs

The \$500 annual maximum reimbursement on drugs for the treatment of Erectile Dysfunction has been removed.

You might want to note this information in your group plan booklet so you will have it all in one place.

### Relating to Group Health and Dental Plan Benefits

#### Preferred Vision Services (PVS)

Most of you will remember PVS from Aetna days. Maritime Life Insurance is now offering a Preferred Provider Network for eyewear. This enables you to purchase your glasses or contacts at a discounted price if you use a PVS service provider. There are over 700 providers in the PVS network. If you wish access the service, call 1 800 668 6444 or visit the web at [www.pvs.ca](http://www.pvs.ca) for a list of the locations nearest to you. Then at the eyewear location simply present your Maritime Life ID card to identify you as a Maritime Group Plan Member. Voila! Up to 20% discount. **Remember, this is only a discount. Don't submit 'claims' to Maritime Life!**

### Well Aware

We have been so pleased with your response to the *Well Aware* Newsletter and perhaps it can be attributed to helping to pull down the Active Group Plan costs. The Spring issue will deal with healthy weights and (oh, oh) our eating habits. If you are carrying the Pensioners Health and Dental insurance, you should have just received the *Well Aware* 2000 Utilization Report detailing the deficit, another \$224,311, and the need for premium increases for 2001.

### Premium Increases

Members with Single coverage will pay \$31.21 per month and Members with Family coverage will pay \$62.96 per month in 2001. And of course, if you live in Ontario or Quebec, don't forget the sales tax.... The Active Plan Members and Employers will also increase our Pensioner Premium Support subsidy to help out.

Deficits occur when the majority of plan participants receive back more in reimbursement than what they paid in, in premium. We have tried to keep the cost of the Plan as low as possible but in doing so have added to the deficit. Some folks have said they think the cost of our Plan is too high. If you have internet access, please go to <http://www.rmsretire.ca> for a jolt. That is the web site for the company that sells dental insurance to retirees whose employers do not have a dental plan for their retirees. You will see that the monthly cost for dental alone is about the same as our health and dental combined.

### Design and Redesign

The Group Insurance Advisory Committee will begin to look at the Health and Dental Plan in January: the Philosophy and Objectives, the menu of benefits currently offered, the premium, the deficit, and the feedback already received from Plan participants. It is likely the face of this Plan will change to some extent for 2002. [This is also the time to offer any other suggestions/comments/concerns you have. Write to the GIAC c/o this Department.](#)

### Medication Records

...a gift from *Well Aware*, our newsletter and RX & D, a group of pharmaceutical manufacturers who provide health related information...we are able to provide, at no cost to you or the Plan, an informative brochure on taking your medications as prescribed and a Medication Record Card to help you keep track of your medications.

### ...you asked for an explanation on: Annual and Lifetime 'Max' on the Group HEALTH Plan

The Health Plan has an annual maximum and a lifetime maximum. The annual maximum is \$3,000. That is the Plan will reimburse an insured family for up to \$3,000 in a calendar year. The maximum amount of reimbursement that the Plan will pay over the lifetime of the insured family is \$15,000. The earliest this maximum could be reached is five years after enrolment and this presumes maximum reimbursement in each of those five years.

The lifetime maximum has a restorable feature to it. The level is restored by \$1,000 per year. It works this way: if you had \$3,000 in Health Plan reimbursement in 1999 you would have had \$12,000 left on your max. On January 1, 2000, this level would have been increased by \$1,000 to \$13,000. If you received no reimbursement in 2000, your level on January 1, 2001 would be up to \$14,000. The full \$15,000 can be restored all at once if satisfactory medical evidence is provided to the insurer.

No one has reached their lifetime max as yet although Members who choose early retirement are more vulnerable for they are 'retired longer' and do not have access to the provincial seniors benefits until age 65.

Remember the lifetime max is on money reimbursed to you by the insurer, not the expense you incurred.

### • the administrative process around death benefits when a Retiree dies

We are usually notified by family or through the Convenor network. In order to process a death claim we need the date of death and the proper documentation. The Department writes to the spouse or the named beneficiary, next of kin, executor etc. if there is a no spouse, and requests a copy of the funeral home Death Certificate or Physician's Statement and copies of birth certificates if there are dependent children. If there is life insurance, Designation of Beneficiary document is forwarded to the insurance company, and although it is the insurer who pays out the group life insurance benefit, we remain the liaison between the beneficiary and the insurer. The pension is paid for the full month in which the Retiree dies and if there is a spouse, the spousal pension is payable from the first of the following month. We calculate pension benefits and offer continuation of health and dental coverage to the spouse/dependent children. If there is no spouse we calculate any remaining entitlement under the 15 year guarantee provision and advise the beneficiary.

The administrative process takes less than one month and if there is a delay, it usually has to do with our receipt of incomplete information.

It is important to remember that we are the point of contact throughout this difficult time and we try to be as helpful as we can.

### Income Tax Stuff

It will soon be that time again, so here we go for your year 2000 tax return. You can claim:

1. your Health and Dental Care premium if you are a Member of the Pensioners Group plan:
  - \$25.85 per month for Single coverage, or
  - \$52.20 per month for Family coverage and, if you live in Ontario or Quebec
  - the 8% sales tax for Ontario folks, 9% for Quebec folks
2. annual deductibles and the \$5 per prescription deductibles
3. unpaid balances after reimbursement (20%, 50%)
4. medical expenses not covered by our Plan (e.g. eye wear)

### 'Our' web site

Have you looked? We are getting there. Try [www.uccan.org/pgi/](http://www.uccan.org/pgi/) We hope to have most of our information and forms up in the next few months. Send us comments, especially nice ones, and suggestions for material you think would be helpful to you.

Have a happy, holy Christmas. Blessings and peace for 2001.



*Alayna Wilson*



