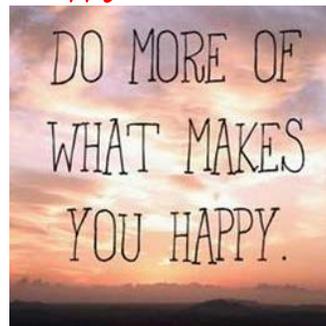




David Burns
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Happy New Year



Taxable Benefits – Group Insurance

- Taxable benefits are those benefits that are subject to income tax in the hands of the employee.
- Whether a premium paid or contribution made by an employer is considered taxable income depends on the nature of the product as well as the province of residence.
- The employer is required to report the taxable benefit to the employee on the applicable income tax slip at the end of the year.

Benefit	Are premiums paid by employer taxable income for employees?	Are benefits received by the employee taxable income?
Group Life Insurance	Yes	No
Dependent Life	Yes	No
AD&D	Yes	No
Short Term Disability	No	Yes
Long Term Disability	No	Yes
Critical Illness	Yes	No
Health	No – Federal Yes – Quebec (Insured)	No – Federal Yes – Quebec (ASO)
Dental	No – Federal Yes – Quebec (Insured)	No – Federal Yes – Quebec (ASO)
HCSAs	No – Federal Yes – Quebec	No – Federal Yes – Quebec
MRP	No – Federal Yes – Quebec	No – Federal Yes – Quebec
Employee Assistance Programs	No	No

- It is important to note that any employer contribution is considered a taxable benefit; employers do not need to be contributing the entire premium.
- Provincial tax paid by the employer is also included as a taxable benefit.



Workplace Wellness

The world of health and wellness is always changing.

More employers are realizing that productivity is directly tied to the health of workers. We can expect to see an increase in workplace policies around employee wellness.



Five workplace trends to look for in 2017

- **Individualized wellness:** Wellness programming will need to account for individuality in all aspects – healthy eating, physical activity, health risk reduction etc.
- **Athleisure dress-codes:** A combination of athletic and leisure wear. Employees are aware of the importance of fitness and being active and are seeking better transitions from the gym to the office.
- **Freelance workers:** This emerging trend has created a new kind of diversity, with full-time permanent employees working alongside freelancers. With many freelancers working remotely workplace wellness programs will need to be creative to include and promote health to full-time, part-time and freelance workers.
- **Generation Z:** 2017 will see the arrival of Generation Z in the workplace, with a new outlook on business, new compensation demands and a further widening of the gap between younger and older workers. Generation Z will be looking beyond the paycheck to put pressures on employers to transform the office environment, embrace flexible working and health benefits.
- **Financial well programming:** Wellness programs have typically targeted active

living, healthy eating and mindfulness. Financial stress management is emerging as a key trend. All generations are looking to employers for financial wellness advice and support on retirement.



Source: Benefits Canada, Five workplace wellness trends for 2017, December 29, 2016

Out of Country Coverage

Group out-of-country coverage is designed to provide benefits during a medical emergency while plan members or their dependents are temporarily outside Canada for business, education or vacation.

These are some examples of what might be considered a medical emergency:

- A sudden, unexpected injury
- An acute episode of a medical condition that was not identified or being treated prior to departure from Canada
- An unexpected and unforeseen acute episode of a previously identified medical condition that was stable and controlled at the time of departure from Canada

Plan members with a medical condition may want to check with their doctor before travelling.

It is important that plan members review their booklets for details of coverage limitations related to trip duration.

Plan members planning to leave the country should ensure they have ongoing coverage with their provincial healthcare plan, since this coverage must be in place for group coverage to apply.

Understanding the cost of Dental Benefits

Recent statistics show that insurance companies are paying at least \$7 billion for Canadians' dental care annually

65% to 75% of employees use their dental benefits each year and use an average of six procedures per visit



If employees do not understand their dental benefits, they may pay unexpectedly out of pocket for their expenses and could be vulnerable to fraudulent dental claims

Employees should know of their



plan maximums and be aware of the procedures covered under their plan



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