



Mainstay Insurance Brokerage Inc. Phone: (905)886-9203

Life as an employee in the world of COVID-19

These are challenging times for employers, employees and all of our families and friends. It's not just "over there" somewhere, it's everywhere and affecting everyone. No one is unaffected and many are impacted severely in a variety of serious ways both medically and economically. With that said, together we can get through this.

Employers must react quickly in order to ensure the future of their business. This may mean changing processes that affect you. Many people are working at home, on rotating shifts, or are having to self-isolate. Some are laying off employees to ensure that the business will be there to bring employees back when things recover.

The government programs are helpful to those businesses that can continue in some manner but for those that have no revenue coming in, it may be too little too late.

These changes have the potential to cause a number of financial and mental burdens on all parties.

Many benefit plans have Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) that can assist you and your family through many of the challenges we are currently experiencing;

- addictions
- anxiety & depression
- financial stresses

- grief & trauma
- marital & family relationships
- mental health
- separation & loss
- work issues & conflict
- work-life balance

Check your employee booklet, ask HR or contact your insurer for more info. Help may be just a phone call away.

Many plans also have paramedical coverage that includes social workers or psychologists. Your booklet and the website will provide information as to coverage limits.

With many paramedical offices being closed, and no way to get treatment in person, some insurers have allowed a variety of services to be offered virtually. Examples include; Dietician, Naturopath, Occupational therapist, Physiotherapist, Clinical psychologist, Social Worker, Speech therapist. Check with your practitioner to see if they are available and with your insurer to see what claims are eligible.

If you're looking for a way to avoid trips that can put you at risk, we have a few suggestions.

[TiaHealth.com](https://tiahealth.com) is an online telemedicine app that allows you to reach a doctor by phone or video.

The service is free (paid for by the province) in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. You can connect to get medical assistance, renew a script, or seek a specialist in any number of areas.

Once you have been prescribed that ointment for a rash, or had your blood pressure script renewed, you can get the prescription sent to your home by delivery or mail order by many pharmacies. If you are looking for one with low mark-ups, great prices and free delivery, then consider [PocketPills.com](https://pocketpills.com). They have everything set up on their website and communicate by text to make it safe and secure.

If you think you have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed, use this self-assessment to help determine your next steps and how to seek further care. It is provided by the Alberta and Ontario governments.

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/#q0>

Lastly, please remember that self-isolation is the best course.

Stay safe, healthy & stay at home!

In order to serve you better

To assist you with your employee benefit plan, we are continually updating our website. Located at:

www.mainstayinsurance.ca

The site provides easy access to many insurance company's websites and to the health and dental claim forms you utilize on a regular basis. We have also added links to the log on pages for members (employees) in order to provide quick access to other websites.

If you use a form that is not on our website and would like it added, please send us an e-mail at:

Dave@mainstayinsurance.ca

Did you know that...

...you can call us if you need help with your benefit plan?

During the COVID-19 chaos, if you are having problems reaching HR, your plan administrator, or just can't find the answer in your employee booklet, please feel free to reach out to us.

We may also be able to connect you to other services such as...

Free online telemedicine visits to reach a doctor to renew scripts or get medical assistance.

Mail order pharmacies with great rates and free delivery.

Call us at: 1-905-886-9203
Send us an E-mail to:
dave@maisntayinsurance.ca



Mainstay Insurance Brokerage Inc.

10 Linton Court
Thornhill, Ontario
L3T 5M9

PHONE:
(905) 886-9203

TOLL FREE:
1-877-624-6789
1-877-MAINSTY

FAX:
(905) 707-0216

E-MAIL:
inquiries@mainstayinsurance.ca

WEBSITE:
Mainstayinsurance.ca

Note: This side of the newsletter is intended for you the plan administrator. The information on the 'front' is targeted more to your staff and can be copied and distributed for their reference.

Just in case you were wondering...

... An Associate Professor at Carleton University has put together a resource document for employees and employers who are searching for information on government support programs.

It is quite thorough, regularly updated and provides details on both provincial and federal assistance programs.

<https://t.co/m0dXFYIZwk?amp=1>

This information is provided as a reference to clients of Mainstay Insurance Brokerage Inc. It is not intended as advice. Your situation and the contract provided by your insurer as well as any relevant legislation shall always take precedence. Always obtain appropriate legal, human resource or accounting advice.

Check out the Mainstay Blog to stay up to date

The Mainstay blog posts contain information that we think will be of interest and that can't wait for our next quarterly newsletter. They are usually sent out once a week, but in the current challenging times of COVID-19 we are sending them out almost daily as government programs change.

The posts are sent as short e-mails that link back to the content on our site. You can also go to our site

www.mainstayinsurance.ca/blog to find information you may have missed or not seen in the past. Blog posts make it easier for you to choose what information is interesting or relevant to you and your firm.

As government programs are updated, legislation changes or we see things that may be of interest to you or your employees,

this is how we'll communicate it to you.

You can always unsubscribe if you feel the information is overwhelming (but we hope you won't). You can also have friends, employees or other business associates who might be interested subscribe to the blog on the blog page on our site. www.mainstayinsurance.ca/blog

What are other employers paying for benefits?

Each year we meet to discuss your plan's renewal. During the meeting we review the change in rates based on changes in your staff demographics, claim costs and the claims of all small businesses in the pool. Some of you see higher increases and others experience lower increases or even the occasional decrease.

The average annual increase in rates for our block of business over the past five years has been about 4.3%. Over the past ten years it has been 3.2%. 2017 saw the highest average increase in almost 15 years, but 2019 had an average rate **reduction** for clients, partly due to the effect of OHIP+ claims being diverted. Those claims returned to private plans after April 1st, 2019 and that appeared on late 2019 and 2020 renewals.

We anticipate slightly reduced claims with late 2020 and 2021 renewals due to the deferred claims caused by medical service provider closures around COVID-19.

We have included our highest increases and decreases in the chart below to illustrate the range of cost changes that our clients have encountered. These are compiled from our current clients and are un-weighted.

Annual Premium Changes

Year	Best	Avg.	Worst
2013	-28%	-2 %	+17%
2014	-20%	0.4%	+14%
2015	-17%	7.1%	+44%
2016	-10%	3.0%	+16%
2017	-17%	9.6%	+44%
2018	-21%	2.6%	+27%
2019	-17%	-0.9%	+31%
2020	-10%	0.6%	+16%
YTD			

The initial response we often get to this is "we want that 28% rate decrease". Who wouldn't, one would think, but in reality, you likely would not want it.

The firm that had that rate decrease actually grew their staff population, while at the same time REDUCING their overall claim costs. They were really overpaying until the pricing was adjusted at renewal to reflect the new staff added and the declining number of claims submitted.

What this summary tells us is that the average client paid a benefit cost slightly higher than inflation, but not as high as one might expect.

Is it likely to get better or worse? We never know for sure but we can expect costs to continue to increase at an average 4-5% per year. This is due to the aging of employees, higher claim utilization and the higher than average increases in healthcare costs that are seen worldwide.

We'll keep sharing our information to help keep you up to date.