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From the Masthead



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

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.

Did you know that...

... the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) requires dentists and individuals to sign up in order to participate in the plan.

At this point, it looks like many dentists will choose NOT to participate in the plan due to the reduced compensation they will receive for their services through the CDCP. In addition, depending on your household income you may have to pay as much as 40% to 60% of your costs covered by the CDCP.

As a result the dental benefits you receive from your employer are more important than ever if you would like to retain your current coverage and dental care provider.

Need help finding a form, phone number, or just help in general, please do not hesitate to call us at: 1-905-886-9203 or send us an e-mail at: Dave@mainstayinsurance.ca

The Pharmacare Act: What Employers Need to Know

Canada has taken a small step in improving healthcare accessibility with the introduction of the National Pharmacare Act.

This legislation has promised to provide universal access to essential prescription medications for all Canadians. At the core of the Act lies a commitment to ensuring that every Canadian has access to vital prescription medications, regardless of their socioeconomic status. This first step is a relatively small one however, to achieving this spoken goal.

With the launch of the program, the federal government has outlined their plan to cover treatments for diabetes and contraception only. With an estimated 3.7 million Canadians affected by diabetes and millions more in need of contraception, the program is expected to appeal to many voters at the next election.

Employers offering healthcare benefits to their employees will find themselves at a crossroads between Pharmacare and their existing benefits packages. In most cases no benefit plan changes will be needed and these limited expenses that the new Act will cover will be removed from the employee benefit plan costs.

While the Act provides a framework for universal drug coverage, the lack of drugs

actually included at least initially, means that very little actual costs will be shifted away from employer paid plans to the government.

Health care in the Canadian Constitution, falls under the purview of the provinces. As a result while the federal government can build the plan, the provinces must be the ones to deliver on it. This creates many challenges as both Quebec and Alberta have already shared their intention to NOT participate in the new plan. Instead they are asking for the equivalent funding to be provided to their provinces and used as the province sees fit. They often claim that the funds are needed more in healthcare overall vs. in pharmacare where private employer plans and public programs are in place for nearly 95% of their populations. Ontario is currently sitting on the fence. Other provinces including BC, Manitoba and the Maritimes may be more supportive.

Employers should familiarize themselves with the specifics of the coverage provided (or NOT provided by the National Pharmacare Act) before making any changes to their plans. Failing to do so may result in employees being

left with no or reduced benefit coverage which no doubt would not be a good situation for your workforce to be in, especially in today's environment.

The Act's estimated cost of approximately \$1.5 billion for the initial phase only, underscores the scale of investment required to achieve full pharmacare. Currently there is no clear source of where this funding will come from. General revenues are the expected source however an adjustment to, or the addition of, employer health taxes is another possibility. Only time will tell who is left to foot the bill. It may be that this provides a saving to individuals but in fact none at all to businesses.

The National Pharmacare Act represents a first step towards achieving universal drug coverage in Canada. However, many uncertainties remain regarding future drugs that will be covered, the actual implementation across the country and the long-term financial funding and sustainability of the program.

We will continue to keep you updated on this topic.

If you have questions, please feel free to reach out anytime.

3 HR Resource Options for Small Business



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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 plus any relevant legislation shall always take precedence. Always obtain appropriate legal, human resource or accounting advice.

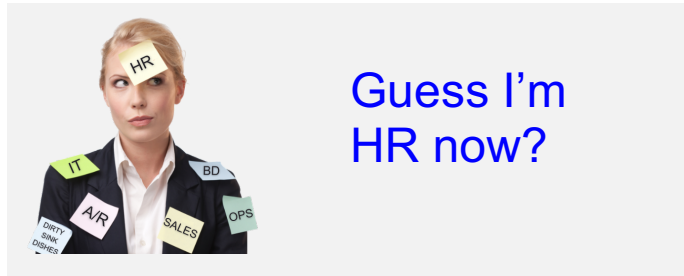
Note: This side of the newsletter is intended for you the plan administrator. The information on the 'front' is targeted more to your staff and can be copied and distributed for their reference.

Just in case you were wondering...

As a Mainstay client, you can utilize our HR Toolkit (templates and handbooks) plus the new HR on Call resources simply by signing up on our website below.

Reach out and ask for a discount code and we will cover the cost.

<https://www.mainstayinsurance.ca/hr-services/>



If you're like most small businesses, the HR function has been creeping on to your already-full plate. With recent egregious court cases and an ever-changing legislative landscape, HR is getting more and more complex and challenging.

HR has morphed into a critical function that often requires expert guidance but hiring an HR professional isn't usually an option for many small businesses.

Let's explore the pros & cons of 3 typical offerings.

1. Self Serve DIY HR

DIY HR is usually defined as an online service that provides HR resources to guide you through basic HR operations.

It typically provides HR templates, employee handbooks, instructions, overview of employment law & emailed updates.

Pros:

- Cost-effective
 - Open 24/7
 - Ideal for straightforward transactional HR activities such as creating forms, job descriptions, recruiting, performance reviews, employee letters
- Emailed updates keep you in the know.

Cons:

- Situational & industry nuances not addressed.
- Non-experts may struggle with complex HR situations, employee handbooks, terminations, legalese.
- Limited support.

2. HR on Call

HROC is a monthly subscription that provides access to an HR professional who can answer your HR best practices questions by phone or email.

Pros:

- Cost-effective
- Allows you to "test drive" HR
- Expertise on demand when you need it without committing to a long-term contract
- Powered by humans.

Cons:

- No continuity. The expert human you reach today may be different on your next call resulting in minimal understanding of your business or culture and at times offering canned "safe" responses.
- Time limit for each call with no review of case materials means that most questions and answers may be general

3. HR Services

Fractional HR services are typically delivered in 3 ways:

- **HR Projects**
Defined outcome
- **Retained HR**
Dedicated part-time HR
- **Fee for Service**
Occasional ad hoc HR

Pros:

- Powered by humans.
- Ongoing relationship & continuity | integrated with your business.
- Can support projects or handle transactional HR for you.
- Support available to more than just one company liaison.
- Services are custom tailored to your business and industry.

Cons:

- Higher budget required.

Conclusion

There are a number of viable HR solutions available to small business.

A solid strategy may be to start with a self-serve HR solution to get familiar with HR basics, supplement with HR on Call, and move towards HR services that can also help you hire the right part-time or full-time HR professional for your business when you are truly ready for one.

Mainstay has offered the DIY tools for several years and is now excited to be adding the HR on call service for our employees and at our expense. Through the program we've provided discounted pricing on services. Check out our website, or give us a call for more information.