

PSHCP Directive Communiqué

Communiqués

[Special Bulletin on Plan Changes - October 2014](#)

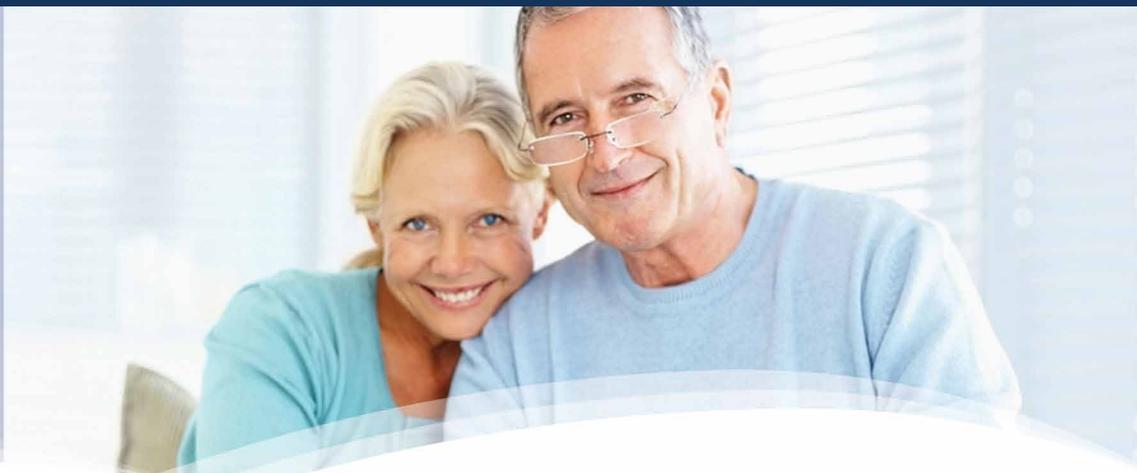
Special Bulletin on Plan changes

OCTOBER 22, 2014

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The Public Service Health Care Plan



Bulletin.

KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE



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NEW BENEFITS

New contribution rates for retired members – April 1, 2015

Effective April 1, 2015, the cost sharing ratio for retired members will change from the current 25:75 (retired member: employer) to a 50:50 model over a four-year phase-in period. Starting April 1, 2015, and each April thereafter, the contributions paid on a monthly basis by retired members for their Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP) Supplementary coverage will gradually shift, as follows, until an equal cost sharing arrangement is achieved:

EFFECTIVE DATE	SHARE OF MONTHLY CONTRIBUTIONS*	
	PENSIONERS WITH SUPPLEMENTARY COVERAGE	EMPLOYER
CURRENT	25%	75%
April 1, 2015	31.25%	68.75%
April 1, 2016	37.5%	62.5%
April 1, 2017	43.75%	56.25%
April 1, 2018	50%	50%

* Monthly contribution rates are revised to reflect actual plan experience. An analysis is currently underway and actual contribution rates in dollar amounts will be communicated to retired members in future Bulletins and on the National Joint Council Web site at www.njc-cnm.gc.ca.

Years of service required to qualify for coverage as a retired member

Currently, to qualify for coverage under the PSHCP as a retired member, you must be in receipt of an ongoing pension benefit under one of the Acts listed in Schedule IV of the Plan, which in most cases requires two years of pensionable service. Pensionable service means the complete or partial years of service credited to you at retirement, and it is used to calculate the pension benefits to which you are entitled. Your total pensionable service is:

- The sum of your periods of current service;
- Service that has been bought back; and
- Service transferred through a Pension Transfer Agreement.

Effective April 1, 2015, to qualify for coverage as a retired member under the PSHCP, an individual must meet the criteria above and will need to be in receipt of an ongoing pension based on at least **six years** of pensionable service. The minimum six years of pensionable service requirement will not apply if:

- You are a retired member in the PSHCP before April 1, 2015;
- You are entitled to a deferred pension benefit immediately before April 1, 2015;
- An ongoing pension benefit becomes payable to you before April 1, 2015 and you have opted to continue coverage under the Plan or have applied to the Plan before that date;
- You receive an ongoing pension benefit as a result of disability;
- You are the survivor of a Plan member or of an individual who was eligible to be a member of the Plan at the time of death, and you are in receipt of a survivor pension (even if the plan member did not have six years of service);
- You are eligible for an ongoing pension benefit but you are no longer employed by the federal public service as a result of Work Force Adjustment;
- You are a member of the Veterans Affairs Canada Client Group, or a survivor of such a member;
- You are eligible for a pension (as a pensioner or survivor) under the *Judges Act*, the *Governor General's Act* or the *Lieutenant Governors Superannuation Act*. 

Servicing, repairs and replacement parts for aerotherapeutic devices

The PSHCP provides coverage for the purchase or rental of certain aerotherapeutic devices. The Plan provisions state that CPAP machines, BiPAP machines, compressors, and maximists can be purchased or rented once every five years. The maximum eligible expense is limited to the reasonable and customary cost for such devices.

Effective October 1, 2014, the PSHCP will provide coverage for up to \$300 a year (reimbursed at 80%) in repairs, servicing, and replacement parts for eligible aerotherapeutic devices. Items such as tubing, filters, cushions and masks, will be eligible for reimbursement along with costs for repairs and servicing. Please note that cleaning solutions and supplies, and warranties will not be covered under the Plan.

If you are unsure what services, repairs or replacement parts may be eligible, please contact the Sun Life PSHCP Call Centre at 1-888-757-7427 (toll-free in North America) or 613-247-5100 in the National Capital Region, available Monday to Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EST). 



DID YOU KNOW?

Laser eye surgery now eligible under the Plan

Effective October 1, 2014, the PSHCP will cover expenses for elective laser eye surgery to correct vision. The benefit is subject to a lifetime maximum of \$1,000 (reimbursed at 80%). Procedures that take place before October 1, 2014, will not be eligible.

Please note that the lifetime maximum is per covered person under the Plan, not per eye or per procedure. The surgery must be performed by an ophthalmologist; however, a physician's prescription (referral) is not required by the Plan.



BENEFITS

Increase to the maximum eligible expense for psychological services

Effective October 1, 2014, the coverage offered under the PSHCP for the services of a psychologist will increase from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per calendar year (reimbursed at 80%). The President of the Canadian Psychological Association has applauded the increase in coverage, calling it a "highly significant step towards greater access to psychological services for Canada's federal public servants and their families."

Although the increase in coverage takes place during the calendar year, the additional \$1,000 maximum will only apply to expenses incurred on or after October 1, 2014. In other words, if you reached the maximum amount of \$1,000 earlier in 2014 but continued to receive treatment from a psychologist, expenses for your appointments before October 1, 2014 will not be eligible. From October to December 2014, you can submit up to an additional \$1,000 in expenses for reimbursement. The next benefit period starts January 1, 2015, at which point the maximum eligible expense is \$2,000 for the calendar year.

For services to be eligible, the psychologist providing treatment must be certified and registered with the professional association of the province or territory where the services take place. For Plan members

who live in isolated posts where there is no practicing psychologist, the PSHCP also provides coverage for the services of a social worker, who must have a Master's degree in Social Work and also be listed on the appropriate provincial or territorial registry. Isolated posts are identified in Appendix A of the Isolated Posts and Government Housing Directive on the National Joint Council website at www.njc-cnm.gc.ca. In all cases, a physician's prescription is required and is valid for one year. 🗺️

BENEFITS

No more annual deductible!

Currently, an annual deductible of \$60 for members with Single coverage and \$100 for members with Family coverage is applied to the first expenses claimed for the calendar year.

Starting next year, the annual deductible will be eliminated, meaning that any expense incurred on or after January 1, 2015, will not be subject to a deductible. You will only be responsible for paying your 20% co-payment and any costs exceeding the reasonable and customary charges or the maximum eligible expenses stated for each benefit.

However, if in 2015 you submit a claim for expenses incurred in the previous year and have not yet paid your deductible for 2014, the deductible will be applied to your claim. In order to be eligible under the PSHCP, your claims for expenses incurred in 2014 must be received by Sun Life no later than December 31, 2015. 🗺️

PSHCP Relief Provision

As mentioned on page 1, effective April 1, 2015, the monthly contribution rates for retired members in the PSHCP with Supplementary coverage will change to a 50:50 cost sharing model. Contribution rates will gradually increase over a four-year phase-in period. However, retired members with low incomes who joined the PSHCP on or before March 31, 2015 will be able to apply for a PSHCP Relief Provision to retain the existing 25:75 cost sharing ratio.

What is the PSHCP Relief Provision?

If you receive a Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or if your net income or the joint net income of you and your spouse/ common-law partner as reported on your income tax Notice of Assessment(s) is lower than the GIS thresholds established for the Old Age Security Act, you may be eligible to retain the 25:75 cost sharing model.

The GIS thresholds for the period from October 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014 are \$17,088 (individual income) and \$22,560 (joint income). These thresholds are reviewed quarterly (in January, April, July and October) and revised as required to reflect increases in the cost of living, as measured by the Consumer Price Index set by Statistics Canada. For the most current GIS thresholds, please visit the Service Canada Web site at www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/oas/payments/index.shtml.

If you believe you are eligible, complete a PSHCP Relief Application Form and return it to your pension office.

The PSHCP Relief Provision Application Form is available online at www.pshcp.ca/forms-and-documents. A paper copy can be obtained by calling 1-855-383-0879. If you are a Canadian Forces or Veterans Affairs Canada member, call 1-800-267-6542.

In order to maintain the 25:75 cost sharing model when the new cost sharing ratio comes into effect, your pension office must receive your application no later than January 15, 2015. Processing delays could occur after that date.

If your GIS or income status changes and you were in the PSHCP on or before March 31, 2015, you can apply for the PSHCP Relief Provision at a later date. For all forms received after January 15, 2015, the PSHCP Relief will be applied the second month after your pension office receives your application. Retroactive reimbursement of the difference in the rates will not be permitted.

