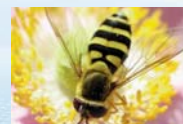


NEWSLETTER OF THE BENEFIT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BPAC BUZZ



LEAD STORY...

Introducing BPAC

Over the past six months, the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) has been working to redevelop its Benefit Plans Advisory Committee (BPAC). Starting in January 2008 with a request for participation, a reinvigorated BPAC has been established with both previous and new members, reflecting increased member involvement, broader representation among hospitals, and greater input and transparency in the OHA Benefit Plans decision making and management.

The BPAC's mission is threefold in which the committee works to:

- Provide access to high-quality, high-value benefit products and services for our members and their employees;
- Advocate on behalf of our members and manage OHA's relationship with our insurance provider to ensure they provide innovative, efficient, and flexible benefit solutions and practices to our members; and
- Champion overall performance improvement and member benefit plans management through ongoing knowledge transfer and education, continuous and effective communications, and efficient system solutions.

As a whole, the BPAC acts in an advisory role to the OHA in relation to the management of the OHA Benefit Plans. This includes plan design, compliance, administration, funding and custody, risk assessment, communication, etc. In 2008, the committee will meet every two months and then on a quarterly basis beginning in 2009.

Fabien Hebert, President and CEO of Smooth Rock Falls Hospital is the chair of the BPAC, providing leadership and guidance to the rest of the committee, made up of: **Don Halpert**, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre; **Randy Fallis**, Lakeridge Health Corporation/Rouge Valley Health System; **David Draffin**, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre; **La-Verne Georgiadis**, North York General Hospital; **Stacey Weir**, St. Joseph's Healthcare London; **Liliana Catapano**, West Park Healthcare Center; **Rod Carroll**, Guelph General Hospital; **Catherine Thomas**, Royal Ottawa Health Care Group; **Irene McClymont**, Leamington District Memorial Hospital; **Tilo Blankenfeldt**, West Parry Sound Health Center; **Greg Shaw** and **Terry Siriska**, OHA.

The BPAC is committed to serving members, liaising with administrators, the OHA and insurance carrier, Desjardins Financial Services (DFS).

For more information about the committee and its mandate, contact BPAC via e-mail at bpac@oha.com. ■

BPAC UPDATES...

Disability Management Certification Course

The OHA's Organizational Health Management Services team has been developing a certification course for disability management and is excited to announce that a pilot program will be starting in Fall 2008. This pilot program will be tested with members of the OHA Disability Management Task Force (a planning and resource committee) with the finalized courses open to all OHA members. The course will consist of distance learning as well as a three-day in-house portion. A reduced course fee will be offered to members of the OHA benefit plans. More information about the Disability Management Certification Course will be available in a future edition of the *BPAC Buzz*.

For further information, contact Kimberly Burrows at kburrows@oha.com or 416-205-1387. ■

Working Group Reports

The BPAC has set up a number of small working groups to help carry forward the activities of the BPAC's mission statement. Pertinent updates for active working groups will be shared in each edition of *BPAC Buzz*.

OHA WEBSITE: BENEFIT PLANS SECTION

This working group has been reviewing the benefit section of the OHA website. They have made several recommendations to make information more accessible and readable. Their recommendations include adding a 'Communications' tab under which BPAC newsletters can be stored, making the benefit brochures clearer and creating a summary of all the benefit plans. These changes will begin taking place on the OHA website over the next couple of months. If you have any specific suggestions on how to improve the benefit section of the OHA website, please contact bpac@oha.com.

SEVERANCE

The Severance Working Group has been attempting to create uniformity within severance arrangements. In May, the Group met with an employment lawyer as well as the OHA Benefit Plans insurance carrier to clarify questions surrounding this issue. The Group will continue to investigate possibilities and develop a guidance booklet. We will keep you updated as this team moves forward. ■

Introducing the 'Benefits Beehive'

A beehive is a symbol of industry and cooperation, and we all know working in the benefits field keeps us all very busy. Cooperation in sharing information and best practices is essential in doing our jobs effectively and efficiently. In that spirit, the OHA is pleased to announce the launch of the 'Benefits Beehive,' a monthly teleconference for benefit plan administrators. This teleconference is an opportunity for you to network with your colleagues and to share and gather new information. The teleconference calls will feature guest speakers and specific topics as well as an opportunity to ask your questions of OHA and DFS representatives.

The Benefits Beehive will follow the same format as the highly successful Wellness Wednesday teleconferences (see article on page 4). If you are familiar with Wellness Wednesdays, you know just how valuable they can be in keeping up with current information and sharing ideas.

The Benefits Beehive will take place on the third Wednesday of every month, except December, beginning **June 18, 2008**. A notice containing the details of the Benefits Beehive will be sent to all contacts on the OHA benefit plan administrators list.

If you are not currently on our Benefit Plan Administrators list, but would like to be, please contact bpac@oha.com or Molly at 416-205-1445. In addition, if you have ideas for topics or speakers, please feel free to submit them. ■

The Benefits of the OHA Benefit Plans

From reduced compliance risk to unique plan provisions, specialized plan expertise, and value-added HR services, there are many advantages to being a member of the OHA Benefit Plans.

REDUCED COMPLIANCE RISK

One of the key advantages to participating in the OHA Benefit Plans is that they already comply with collective bargaining agreements. This greatly reduces the risk for participating health care providers and simplifies the implementation process, time, and cost.

UNIQUE PLAN PROVISIONS

As a knowledgeable and reliable advocate for hospitals, the OHA continues to be a powerful voice in influencing the marketplace to better meet the needs of its members. By leveraging the collective purchasing power of Ontario's health care organizations, the OHA provides members access to insurance benefits at competitive rates.

This collective purchasing power also gives the BPAC significant leverage in the insurance marketplace to negotiate unique provisions and services for the OHA's Benefit Plans members - such as unlimited coverage maximums and plan portability - that may not be available in smaller plans.

SPECIALIZED PLAN EXPERTISE

The OHA Benefit Plans also provide participating members with access to specialized plan resources who understand the health care industry and the unique benefit needs of its members. Plan members can also access the OHA's continually growing benefits knowledge base, which will help in developing new solutions to meet the ever-changing needs of health care institutions and their employees.

VALUE-ADDED SERVICES

There is also a wealth of complementary value-added services available to OHA Benefit Plans members that are normally offered on a fee-for-service basis to other OHA member organizations. These include:

- Customized consulting on disability, safety, and infection control
- Human resources expertise and support on sector-specific issues including WSIB, short-term disability, and human rights
- Reduced fees for Disability Management Certification Course
- Health and safety initiatives
- Sector-specific seminars.

As you'll read elsewhere in this newsletter, the BPAC is also working on several additional value-added services for Benefit Plans members, including:

- Specialized OHA Benefit Plans administration training for member plan administrators
- An enhanced OHA Benefits Website to support plan member education and administration
- Semi-annual BPAC newsletters to update members on Benefit Plans initiatives, decisions, resolved issues, and frequently asked questions
- Benefit Plans issue resolution process and communication
- More transparent governance of the OHA Benefit Plans.

BPAC is also currently working on a policy for re-entering the program in an effort to provide ongoing protection for loyal members of the OHA Benefit Plans. More details about this new process will be coming shortly. But, as you can see, membership in the OHA Benefit Plans offers much more than simply insurance.

To start taking advantage of these additional benefits of plan membership, contact Terry Siriska at tsiriska@oha.com or 416-205-1397. ■

The OHA Benefit Plans: Cost-Benefit Analysis Tool

Some OHA benefit plan members have voiced an interest in exploring alternative arrangements for their benefit plans. To help members assess the value of the OHA Benefit Plans vs. other arrangements, the BPAC has developed a Benefit Plans Cost-Benefit Analysis Tool. This tool will help you quantify your current plan costs and benefits as well as the costs and benefits involved in designing, marketing, and negotiating an independent benefit plan.

OHA members wishing to obtain a copy of the Benefit Plans Cost-Benefit Analysis Tool can contact Terry Siriska at tsiriska@oha.com or 416-205-1397. ■

Wellness Wednesdays

Since 2002, the OHA has been hosting a series of 'Wellness Wednesday' teleconference calls. The goal of the Wellness Wednesday series is to facilitate networking and sharing of best practices among Canadian health care organizations related to organizational health, employee satisfaction and health promotion. Public and private sector strategies and lessons are shared in relation to these items. This teleconference is an important aspect of the OHA's Healthy Hospital Initiative because it promotes and enables hospital collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Participation on a monthly basis in this series is voluntary. For those members who choose to log onto the teleconference participation is expected by way of providing organizational updates, specific programming ideas, successes and challenges and asking relevant questions of other participating members.

The Wellness Wednesdays conference calls occur the last Wednesday of every month (except July, August and December).

If you are an OHA member and interested in Wellness Wednesdays, contact Kimberly Burrows at kburrows@oha.com or 416-205-1387. ■

Survey Gauges Satisfaction with OHA Benefit Plans Insurance Carrier

To further enhance transparency and accountability, BPAC recently conducted a satisfaction survey, asking members for feedback about the OHA Benefit Plans Insurance Carrier, Desjardins Financial Services (DFS). While the survey only received a 20% response rate, the respondents (made up of Chief Human Resources Officers, Human Resources Managers, Benefit Plan Administrators, and others) provided useful insight into how the current service is working and how it can be improved.

Among the strengths of the OHA Benefit Plans, members noted that they appreciate the link it provides between members and the OHA. Respondents were mostly pleased with how easy it is to access DFS representatives, their timeliness in responding to needs and DFS's ability to keep plan details up-to-date.

Some of the areas identified for improvement included the effectiveness of DFS representatives in resolving problems or complaints and general, overall satisfaction.

Recognizing that the partnership between the OHA and DFS is still quite young, the survey allowed an opportunity for members to make their priorities known. The survey also created a benchmark by which future satisfaction surveys will be measured.

The OHA has already started working with DFS to develop an action plan to further develop the budding relationship between OHA members and DFS. In particular, this action plan involves improving the claims process, helping members better understand contracts, helping members with their billings, improving amendment processes, and increase overall communications.

A separate communiqué with the specific details of DFS's action plan will be sent out to all members of the OHA Benefit Plans shortly. Members can also look forward to a series of site visits that DFS and the OHA will be making over the

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DFS CORNER...

This column is written by Desjardins Financial Services (DFS) and will provide you with useful information, updates and tips to ease your plan administration.

ACCESSING OHA FORMS FROM THE WEBSITE

Forms are updated periodically and posted on the website. When submitting a form, make sure to use its most current version. To access the website:

- Type www.oha.ca in the address field of your internet browser;
- Under "Programs" scroll down to OHA Benefit Plans, select "Desjardins Financial Security." This will take you to 'Your Information Center for the OHA Benefits Plans;'
- Scroll down and click on 'I want access to Administration Forms' or 'Claim Forms;'
- In the OHA Download Center, scroll down to Administrative Forms or Claim Forms and click.

Note that the web address can be added to your "Favourites" menu for quick and easy access.

Your employer/group name, policy number, employee identification and division number (union affiliation) should be indicated on all forms. Policy and division numbers can be obtained from various sources:

- DFS contract;
- Remittance template (for self-administered groups);
- Monthly invoices (for billed groups).

If you still encounter problems identifying your group policy and/or division numbers, contact your Service Representative for assistance. If you do not know who your service representative is, please contact **Rose Santucci** at rose.santucci@dfs.ca, 416-926-2722, or **Manuela Cruz** at manuela.cruz@dfs.ca, 416-926-2622.

SENDING FORMS AND WRITTEN REQUESTS

All administrative and claim forms must be mailed to the address shown on the form. We record and track all mail received at our P.O. Box address.

For courier delivery, please use our regular mailing address:
Desjardins Financial Security
95 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1N7.

Be sure to include the department name and/or intended recipient's name in the address.

Administrative changes or corrections to your account can be submitted by e-mail at adminchanges@dfs.ca. Incoming e-mails are monitored daily. Be sure to include your group policy number and group name in the "Subject" field.

CALL CENTRE INQUIRIES

The Call Centre is staffed with knowledgeable people who can answer questions regarding claims, life insurance conversion, contract provisions, Long Term Disability (LTD) claim status updates and much more. The toll free number to reach our Call Centre is 1-800-263-1810.

When contacting us about a claim, make sure that you have your group number, the claimant's name and details of the request on hand. This allows us to review the request quickly and get back to you within 24 hours.

Without the member's written consent, our LTD Assessors cannot contact medical professionals for additional information or to discuss the claim. Therefore, it is very important that employees submit their

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Continued from page 4 Survey Gauges Satisfaction

coming months. Details about these visits will be shared with area hospitals as details become available.

The survey was extremely important in identifying the needs of members. Moving forward, the OHA and the BPAC will provide active follow-up to each of the areas of concern identified, with ongoing feedback remaining an important element to the success of the OHA Benefit Plans. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey!

If you are a member of the OHA Benefit Plans and have a comment, suggestion or question about the OHA Benefit Plans, please contact Terry Siriska, Director, Organizational Health Management Services, at 416-205-1397 or tsiriska@oha.com. ■

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completed portion of the Disability Claim Form - Employee Statement on a timely basis. At the same time, employers are required to complete the Employer Statement of the Disability Claim form.

We will be actively participating in future articles by providing tips and updates.

For more information or to suggest a topic for the next issue, OHA Benefit Plans members may send an e-mail to bpac@oha.ca. ■

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS...

This section of BPAC Buzz will be used to publicly share common questions OHA members may have about the OHA Benefit Plans.

Q Where can I find disability claim forms?

A Disability claims forms can be found online at the link below or through the OHA website. If you are looking for the forms through the OHA website at www.oha.com, under "Programs - OHA Benefits Plans - Desjardins Financial Security - Claim Forms." The Disability Claim (employer's and employee's statement) and the Physician's Statement are near the bottom of the Claim Forms Page, or you can access it directly from this newsletter by clicking [here](#).

Q How do I access HOODIP brochures?

A The HOODIP brochures, as well as all other brochures, can be found at the link below or on the OHA website. If you are accessing the forms through the [OHA website](#), go to "Programs - OHA Benefit Plans - Benefit Brochures." You can also access the brochures [here](#).

Q Who do I contact if I have questions about the 1980 and the 1992 HOODIP brochures?

A If you have questions about the 1980 and 1992 HOODIP brochures, please contact **Lis Turner**, Disability Management Consultant at lturner@oha.com or 416-205-1491 or **Kimberly Burrows**, Research Analyst, at kburrows@oha.com or 416-205-1387.

OHA Benefit Plans members may submit questions to bpac@oha.com. ■