

BeneFACTS

...an employee benefits
newsletter

FROM THE MEARIE GROUP

WINTER EDITION, 2010

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2010

Dental Fee Guide Increases

Dental Fee Guides for most provinces and territories are reviewed annually. Details of the average increases are as follows:

Province	Average Increase	Effective Date in 2010
Alberta	6.0%*	February 1st
British Columbia	2.42%	February 1st
Manitoba	3.36%	January 1st
Northern Manitoba**	4.36%	January 1st
Newfoundland & Labrador	<i>Not yet available</i>	January 1st
New Brunswick	2.0%	January 1st
Nova Scotia	2.04%	February 1st
Ontario	2.43%	January 1st
Prince Edward Island	2.07%	January 1st
Quebec	2.9%	January 1st
Saskatchewan	4.07%	January 1st
Northwest Territories	<i>Not yet available</i>	April 1st
Nunavut	No changes for Nunavut in 2010	April 1st
Yukon	<i>Not yet available</i>	April 1st

* The Alberta Dental Association does not publish a fee guide. Therefore, each insurance company determines its own increases to their reimbursement limits; as a result, this percentage may vary significantly by insurer.

The average increase for 2010 in Ontario is estimated to be 2.43%. However, as Ontario adjusts the fees by service category rather than on a uniform basis, the actual impact to plan sponsors may vary depending on the plan design and utilization of the covered members. Details of the increase are provided in the chart on the left.

Ontario

Service Category	Percentage Cost Increase
Diagnostic	2.4%
Preventive	2.5%
Restorations - Amalgam	3.5%
Restorations - Composite	2.3%
Crowns	3.5%
Endodontics	1.9%
Periodontics	1.3%
Fixed Prosthodontics	1.3%
Oral Surgery	2.3%
Other	1.5%

Canada/Quebec Pension Plan 2010 Update

Rates and Benefits	2010	2009
Yearly Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE)	\$47,200	\$46,300
Yearly Basic Exemption (YBE)	\$3,500	\$3,500
Maximum Contributory Earnings (YMPE minus YBE)	\$43,700	\$42,800
Employee/Employer Contribution Rate	4.95%	4.95%
Maximum Employee/Employer Yearly Contribution	\$2,163.15	\$2,118.60
Self-Employed Contribution Rate	9.90%	9.90%
Maximum Self-Employed Yearly Contribution	\$4,326.30	\$4,237.20
Maximum Monthly Retirement Benefit (age 65)	\$934.17	\$908.75
Death Benefit	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Maximum Monthly Spouse's Pension:		
CPP: under age 65	\$516.57	\$506.38
age 65 and over	\$560.50	\$545.25
QPP: under age 45 (no dependent children, not disabled)	\$459.43	\$449.47
under age 45 (with dependent children, not disabled)	\$745.93	\$734.82
under age 45 (disabled)	\$776.41	\$765.18
ages 45 to 64	\$776.41	\$765.18
age 65 and over	\$560.50	\$545.25
Maximum Monthly Orphan's Pension (each Child):		
CPP	\$214.85	\$213.99
QPP	\$68.22	\$67.95
Maximum Monthly Disability Benefit:		
CPP: Contributor	\$1,126.76	\$1,105.99
Child	\$214.85	\$213.99
QPP: Contributor	\$1,126.73	\$1,105.96
Child	\$68.22	\$67.95



Pension plan



Turning Over A New Financial Leaf

Quick Tips To Reduce Debt & Start Saving

The recent economic crunch has caused many people to not only tighten their belts, but also lose sleep: a recent Canadian study found that nearly a quarter of us are tossing and turning at night over money worries.

Even if you're guilty of overspending and under saving, it's never too late to turn over a new financial leaf. Start now with a few simple steps that will help you reduce your debt, save for a rainy day, ease relationship quarrels over money and ultimately lower your stress levels.

Get real. It may seem easier to stay in the dark about what you owe, but you can't change what you don't acknowledge. Use a spreadsheet to keep track of your income and expenditures—it's the easiest way to see where your money is going and where you have room to cut back.

End the credit crunch. Credit card debt can create a never-ending cycle of overspending and high interest rates that can quickly dig you into a big financial hole. If you don't pay your credit card in full every month (the interest-free way to go) start by adding up exactly what you owe and looking to see if you can consolidate your debt using a lower interest line of credit. If that's not an option, create a plan that covers all your minimum payments and pays off the highest interest rate cards first. Avoid further credit temptation by leaving the charge card at home and using cash for day-to-day purchases.

Trim the fat from your expenses. Check your phone, cable and internet bills for "extra" features you're being charged for (and may not be aware of) and cancel unused services. Look for other easy ways to lower your monthly expenses so you'll have more left at the end of the day for debt reduction and savings. Switching from

monthly to bi-weekly mortgage payments sneaks in one or two extra payments annually and can have your mortgage paid off *years* faster. Many mortgage agreements also allow you to pay an extra 15 per cent on your installments and a lump sum on the anniversary date of the mortgage. Check the fine print though or you may be penalized for overpaying.

Get with the program. The three magic words to saving are: plan, plan and plan. Plan your weekly meals, lunches, grocery lists and shopping outings. Your morning coffee and afternoon lunches can easily add up to hundreds of dollars each month. Skip the high-priced frothy coffees and invest in a jazzy thermos to cart around your beverage of choice. Trim your budget and your waistline by packing a healthy lunch for work. Bypass the take-out and instead work out a weekly meal schedule that turns dinner time into a fun family event. If you must head to the mall, avoid impulse buys by making a list of essentials beforehand and sticking to it. Save time, money and gas by doing your homework and looking over online flyers which can help you comparison shop and keep you in the know about sales, coupons and bargains.

Alter your mode of transportation. Do your part for the environment and save money at the same time by biking to work or walking your children to school. You'll not only shed stress and weight, but can also eliminate the need for a gym membership. If you don't live close to work compare transit prices or consider car-pooling and use the most cost-effective option. This can save you thousands of dollars in gas, repairs, maintenance and parking.

Go green. Keep heaters a few degrees lower and air conditioners a few degrees higher. Use energy saving light bulbs (or CFL bulbs) and

remember that your mom was right—switching off the lights in rooms you're not using will save you energy and money over time. Throw out that old beer fridge in the basement and ensure your home is thoroughly insulated and that drafts are shut out so your heating (and money) doesn't literally go out the window. Investigate energy saving options and information on government rebates for buying greener, *Energy Star* choices when it's time to replace an appliance.

Find it free. Your local library is a great resource for books, magazines and even movies. You'll not only save money but also gain extra storage space. Instead of shelling out big money for family excursions, pack a lunch and go hiking, watch a parade or explore other free kid-friendly activities and events offered in your community.

Start saving today. Take all the money you're saving (by following the above steps) and create a plan. Whether you open up a Tax Free Savings Account (TFSA), put the money into an RRSP, GIC, Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) or all of the above, it's important that you create a savings plan that meets your needs now and down the road. If you find all the options (and acronyms) overwhelming then talk to a financial planner or bank to get the information you need to make savvy saving decisions.

There's no doubt that financial uncertainty has created a lot of anxiety and unease, but it has also made a lot of us take a closer look at how we spend and save money. Money may not buy happiness, but financial stability—achieved by reducing your debt load, finding ways to cut costs and actively saving—can definitely ease stress and improve relationship and family dynamics.

2010 Employment Insurance Update

(All Provinces except Quebec)

Rates and Benefits	2010	2009
Annual Maximum Insurable Earnings	\$43,200	\$42,300
Maximum Weekly Benefit	\$457.00	\$447.00
Employee Premium Rate	\$1.73 per \$100 of insurable earnings	\$1.73 per \$100 of insurable earnings
Employer Premium Rate	\$2.422 per \$100 of insurable earnings	\$2.422 per \$100 of insurable earnings
Maximum Annual Employee Contribution	\$747.36	\$731.79
Maximum Annual Employer Contribution	\$1,046.30	\$1,024.51

2010 Employment & Quebec Parental Insurance Plan Update (Quebec Only)



Rates and Benefits	2010	2009
Annual Maximum Insurable Earnings	\$43,200	\$42,300
Maximum Weekly Benefit	\$457.00	\$447.00
Employee Premium Rate*	\$1.36 per \$100 of insurable earnings	\$1.38 per \$100 of insurable earnings
Employer Premium Rate*	\$1.90 per \$100 of insurable earnings	\$1.93 per \$100 of insurable earnings
QPIP		
Maximum Annual Insurable Earnings	\$62,500.00	\$62,000.00
Employee Premium Rate	\$0.506 per \$100 of Insurable earnings	\$0.484 per \$100 of Insurable earnings
Employer Premium Rate	\$0.708 per \$100 of Insurable earnings	\$0.677 per \$100 of Insurable earnings



Benefacts is published by The MEARIE Group, which manages and administers The MEARIE Group Employee Benefit Program.

Products include Life and Disability Insurance, AD&D, Extended Health and Dental Benefits, an Employee Assistance Program; Group Home & Auto Insurance; and Comprehensive Care (health & dental program for retirees).

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Our Thanks to Comprehensive Benefit Solutions Limited and Great West Life for assistance and contributions to this newsletter.

NEED FORMS? MEARIE Employee Benefit Program Members

Don't forget, many of our forms are available through The MEARIE Group's Web site.
Be sure to visit us at www.mearie.ca

Forms include:

- Health and Dental Claims Forms
- Salary Change Report Form
- Enrollment Form
- Change Form
- Out of Province and Out of Canada Claim Form

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