

# Bargaining and Benefits

# Purpose of today's session

- ▶ Not a formal meeting
- ▶ Opportunity for members to talk about EHB and bargaining
- ▶ Hoping for member to member discussion
- ▶ PBC zoom posted on our websites for viewing
- ▶ Please put your name in the chat if you wish to speak
- ▶ We'll do our best to answer questions!

# Benefits must be bargained

- ▶ Benefits are part of our compensation from the employer
- ▶ Contract teachers pay small amount of our premiums
- ▶ TTOCs may participate but pay full amount

# Local and Provincial Bargaining

- ▶ VTF and all other locals negotiated their benefits packages directly with their employers prior to 1996
- ▶ PELRA legislation created provincial bargaining unit and required salary, benefits, workload and paid leave to be negotiated provincially
- ▶ Locals lost the ability to negotiate benefits moving forward
- ▶ Provincial table created provincial benefits plan as an “opt in” model
- ▶ Most locals, over the years, have opted in, due to having originally negotiated fewer benefits

# How are improvements made?

- ▶ The provincial table negotiates improvements to the provincial benefits plan
- ▶ Must consider needs of whole province, not local by local priorities
- ▶ Less ability for locals to make local-specific improvements (i.e. practitioner availability in the North)
- ▶ VTF approached the Board to re-distribute existing benefits for same cost, that opportunity was declined by management
- ▶ Changes to VTF plan would require locals to negotiate the right to bargain benefits locally

# VTF Plan vs Standard Provincial Plan

- ▶ Some improvements in areas where our plan has remained stagnant (vision care, acupuncture, hearing aids, counselling, fertility)
- ▶ Blue Rx and pay-direct card create “efficiencies” for both members and the Board
- ▶ “unlimited” benefits for some paramedical services and doctor-prescribed drug coverage in VTF plan only
- ▶ VTF Collective Agreement provides “joint ownership”

# Information from last week's meeting

- ▶ The limits on the provincial plan cannot be exceeded with a doctor's note
- ▶ Only medications on the Blue Rx list will be covered
- ▶ The paramedical limits will not increase without being bargained (i.e. will not increase with practitioner fees)
- ▶ PBC can require members to use lower-cost alternatives prior to being considered for more expensive medication prescribed by a doctor. There are no across-the-board timelines for how long a medication has to fail before the prescribed medication will be approved. There would be a one year transition period for member who are currently on a non-Blue Rx medication

# Information from last week's meeting

- ▶ If a member is currently on a more expensive medication that is working for them, they may be required to change to a lower-cost alternative, if that hadn't been tried first.
- ▶ The cost to members of the switch in premiums, and for TTOCs who pay the full cost was not provided.
- ▶ Moving to the provincial plan will not have an impact on dental or life insurance provided in our current collective agreement.
- ▶ Provision of drug card results in lower dispensing and service fees (and also limits for coverage)
- ▶ Adjudication of approval of drugs that are not the lowest cost alternative are determined by cost and PBC research / experience, not your doctor



# Reasonable and Customary Limits

- ▶ BCPSEA contract with Pacific Blue Cross allows them to set Reasonable and Customary Limits in both VTF and Standardized EHB plans
- ▶ Can be for the maximum claimable amount for practitioner charges (per hour rates for practitioners) -or- reasonable number of appointments per year
- ▶ Many of these can be exceeded with a doctor's note

# Process

- ▶ Voting to stay = nothing changes, we will vote again when next improvements are made to the provincial plan
- ▶ Voting to move = final decision - returning to VTF plan is not possible
- ▶ Changes would take effect April or May

# Vote February 27-28

- ▶ Not a LRB vote, internal vote
- ▶ Simply Voting - facilitated by the BCTF
  
- ▶ Regarding the Extended Health Benefits Plan, I vote to:
  - Remain in the local Vancouver EHB plan
  - Move to the standardized provincial EHB plan
  
- ▶ Make sure your email contact information is updated