



## CEPACC Membership Bulletin July, 2008

### Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB's)

Most members are now aware of changes that were made to the post employment benefits program a couple of years ago. The company sent notices to employee's homes early in 2006, however, many members are only now beginning to realize the changes and are starting to ask questions. These are benefits that cover medical, dental, life insurance etc. after you retire.

- 1) **Those employees who were within 2 years from being eligible for an unreduced defined benefit pension** as of Jan 15, 2006 may choose the former post retirement benefits for their respective province or choose the new OPEB's program. To be clear, you did not have to retire during the two years, you just had to be eligible to retire. If you are not sure if you were within 2 years of being eligible to retire as of Jan 15, 2006, please contact the Employee Service Centre at [people@aliant.ca](mailto:people@aliant.ca) or call 1-877-351-4100. .
- 2) **Employees who were more than 2 years from being eligible to retire as of January 15, 2006** will be covered by the new OPEB's program which provides a company supplement to purchase post retirement benefits. The company will pay anywhere from \$666.70 - \$1000.00 annually into a Health Spending Account for your reimbursement of health insurance premiums, dental insurance premiums or to pay directly for eligible health and dental expenses. The amount you are entitled to is based on a formula of years of service and at what age you worked those years. This individual insurance would have to be purchased through an outside insurance provider such as Blue Cross, Great West Life, SunLife, Manulife etc. It is important to note that you have to be **approved** by the insurance company at the time of retirement to be eligible to receive these benefits. If you or your spouse have any medical issues, one or both of you may not be approved to receive these benefits. For example, if an employee has a known condition such as diabetes, they could be given coverage, at a very high cost per month, and they may or may not have the diabetes drugs included. For most plans, you have to medically qualify for them.
- 3) **Employees hired after January 15, 2006** may access individual medical, dental and other coverage through an outside insurance provider such as Blue Cross, Great West Life, SunLife, Manulife etc. at their own expense. There will be no company supplement.

The Council has learned that Medavie Blue Cross offers 'Assured Access' which guarantees group health benefits in the event that you lose them sometime in the future. After qualifying medically, 'Assured Access' pre-approves an individual or family for a personal health plan over the policy term in the event group coverage is lost in the future which includes when you retire. This may be a good option for members who fall under #2 or #3 above. If you are currently in good health and are approved for 'Assured Access' now, you will be guaranteed medical and dental benefits when you retire or lose your job, even if you develop health issues in the future. You will be approved for coverage tomorrow at today's health. Members may want to consider purchasing 'Assured Access' from Blue Cross for a monthly fee or some other policy from another insurance company that guarantees future health benefits for themselves and their families. It is important to ensure that you aren't left without any medical benefits in the future.

For more details on OPEB's, refer to Gateway/HR/HR Home Page/Your Benefits/Other Post Employment Benefits OPEB's or contact the Employee Service Centre [people@aliant.ca](mailto:people@aliant.ca) or call 1-877-351-4100.

In solidarity,

Penny Fawcett

Noel Pauley

Mary Croke

Phil Briffett

Chuck Rouse

Joyclin Coates