

# ASEBP Trustees' Report

Volume 28-20 No. 05 June 2020

## Highlights of the June 19, 2020, Trustees' Meeting

### 1. COVID-19 Update

- There is one new, temporary plan design policy exception to report this month. The pre-existing condition clause exception period has been increased to 180 days (from 90) to match temporary changes affecting layoffs. This change applies to employees laid off between March 15, 2020, and June 30, 2020, without benefits. If these employees return to work by September 30, 2020, the pre-existing condition clause will not apply to their break in coverage during the layoff
- In March, the Government of Alberta introduced a limit on prescription medication fills and refills, limiting the supply to 30 days. In response, ASEBP suspended the five dispensing fee maximum for maintenance medications. This maximum will be re-introduced for most maintenance medications. The suspension will remain in effect for those medications that remain in short supply
- The ASEBP Trustees reviewed newly identified risks associated with the anticipated COVID-19 recovery

### 2. Plan Design – Second Reading (for January 1, 2021)


- The ASEBP Trustees are constantly striving for value; balancing plan benefits and the cost of investing in the current and future health of covered members. They are sensitive to participant needs and stakeholder concerns, as well as the impact of changing medical, dental, pharmaceutical and other practices, in addition to changes to the health care system. The ASEBP Trustees are also cognizant of plan utilization, statutory or regulatory requirements and market conditions (i.e. competition from other benefit providers and fiscal constraints)
- The ASEBP Trustees gave **final approval** (second reading) to a number of plan design changes effective **January 1, 2021**
- **Extended Disability Benefits (EDB)**
  - The pre-existing condition clause will not apply to covered members returning to work and re-enrolling in EDB:
    - After statutory maternity/parental leave
    - After a break in employment of no more than 90 calendar days, whether with the same employer or another ASEBP-participating employer (currently only allowed when the break is due to layoff and the covered member returns to the same employer)
  - The definition of total disability will be changed:
    - To clarify that during the elimination period, the employee must be unable to perform the “material and substantial” duties of the employee’s normal occupation (currently only refers to duties of the employee’s normal occupation; “material and substantial” is used in the two-year, own occupation definition of total disability)

#### ASEBP TRUSTEES

Drew Chipman, Chair  
Fred Kreiner, Vice-Chair  
Holly Bilton  
Chad Bowie  
Evelyn Chan  
Arlene Hrynyk  
Doug Lerke  
Shirene Napier  
Kim Pasula  
Daryl Scott

#### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kelli Littlechilds

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- To remove the clause extending the two-year, own occupation period of total disability to the next August 31 or January 31, as current return-to-work practices have evolved and these dates are no longer required
  - Annual income documentation will be required for purposes of determining ongoing benefit payments (currently an ad-hoc approach)
  - A more defined pre-approval requirement will be introduced for disability recipients who plan to be out of the country for more than 180 days
  - Making false representations for the purpose of obtaining and/or maintaining benefits will result in suspension of payments
  - Cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for Rehabilitation Employment participants will be determined under the ad-hoc program in place for other EDB recipients (currently subject to periodic changes tied to the Alberta Consumer Price Index)
  - A housekeeping change will remove legacy wording that is no longer relevant within the re-occurrence clause; the wording makes reference to rehabilitation employment outside the Rehabilitation Employment Program (the wording predates introduction of that program)

- **Extended Health Care**

- New limitations on transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) machines and neuromuscular stimulators will be introduced so that \$150 is available every three years (the overall \$300 lifetime maximum for all rehabilitation equipment will remain in place)
- Coverage for children who need prosthetic limbs will no longer be subject to the frequency limitation of having one replacement every three years (the \$15,000 per limb maximum will remain in place)
- Hearing tests to a maximum of \$70 every three years will be added to the hearing aid benefit (the \$3,000 combined maximum every three years will remain in place)

- **Multiple benefits**

- The maximum benefits coverage period during a temporary layoff will be extended from 90 days to 180 days

### 3. Short-Term Disability Management Program – Trial

- The ASEBP Trustees approved a two-year trial for short-term disability management
  - The trial will be open to a limited number of employer groups
  - The administrative and case management services provided during the trial will relate to sick leave absences greater than 14 calendar days
  - Payment of sick leave benefits will remain the responsibility of employers
  - Services will be provided at no cost to employers
  - The trial will be launched during the 2020-21 fiscal year

### 4. Committee Appointments

- Doug Lerke has been named an Extended Disability Benefits Appeal Committee (EDBAC) member. Other EDBAC members are Daryl Scott and Dwight Anthony, as well as alternate members Holly Bilton and Jojy Oommen
- The Executive Committee includes the Chair, Drew Chipman, and Vice-Chair, Fred Kreiner

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- The Audit and Risk Committee includes Kim Pasula and Shirene Napier

## 5. A Farewell

- The ASEBP Trustees wish Chad Bowie all the best, acknowledging his contributions as an ASEBP Trustee and member of the EDBAC during his tenure

## 6. Summer Break

- The ASEBP Trustees will take their usual summer break. Regularly scheduled meetings will resume in September



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The ASEBP Trustees' Report provides an overview of topics discussed at all ASEBP Trustees' Meetings. These meetings provide the opportunity for ASEBP Trustees to come together to discuss matters of importance at ASEBP—from the financial health of the benefit plan to the introduction of new benefits and programs. While all information in each report is an accurate account of decisions made at the meetings, there can be changes that occur between first and second readings of certain topics, which may result in differences between their reporting.

To learn more about the ASEBP Trustees, please visit the Governance page, found in the About section of our website, [asebp.ca](http://asebp.ca).



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