



Enhanced Disability Management Program to provide stronger safety net for members

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-HOW WILL I TAKE CARE OF MY FAMILY if I get sick, or become unable to work?"

That's a question that hovers in the back of almost everyone's mind. We assume that our health benefits will take care of us, and for the most part, they do.

For many years, however, disability management programs have varied from employer to employer, resulting in a patchwork of coverage with many holes. Programs can be hard to access and in some cases don't help members with debilitating factors that don't fall under traditional medical categories ... family issues, workplace friction and more.

That's led to real problems for some members ... employees who, as a result of their dedication to their jobs and co-workers unwittingly inflict serious harm to themselves by remaining at work when they should be off getting treatment; long-serving members who develop chronic conditions but find they do not have enough sick leave to bridge the five-month LTD waiting period; members who find themselves frustrated and bewildered by a complicated array of programs and providers including Healthcare Benefit Trust, Great West Life, LTD benefits administrators, WorkSafeBC case managers and vocational rehabilitation consultants, the employers' human resources advisors, and disability management consultants.

That's why HSA has been working to implement the Enhanced Disability Management Program (EDMP). Jointly developed over several years, by HSA, the BC Nurses Union and the Health Employers Association of BC, EDMP is an employee-centred, pro-active, appropriate and customized disability management program for employees with both occupational and non-occupational illnesses and injuries.

"EDMP is going to put an end to a patchwork of unprograms that protect some HSA members and let others fall through the gaps," said HSA President Reid Johnson. "It's an opportunity for our members to access better services, faster, no matter who they work for."

EDMP will apply to employees with a date of disability after April 1, 2011, but the implementation is still in process. Health authorities are now bringing their procedures in line with the goal of rolling out all programs by the end of 2012, but by early 2012 members will be able to contact HSA representatives responsible for promoting EDMP in their region and helping members learn about the new procedures.

"These regional representatives will play a big role in helping HSA members make the most of EDMP," said Johnson. "We had a pile of applicants, and we've identified a number of members who have a passion for disability management, great skills with people, problem-solving and multi-tasking, and above all a real dedication to making sure fellow HSA members get the help they need with early intervention, long-term disability and return to work issues."

Members interested in finding out when they can talk to a regional EDMP representative should contact their steward or the HSA office at 604-439-0994 or toll-free 1-800-663-2017. 

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