

## NBTF Group Insurance Employee Benefits Bulletin

The NBTF Group Insurance Trustees provides us with a competitive employee benefits package. Most of us have a general idea of what benefits we are entitled to, but don't fully understand the details of how programs work. You will receive these "Benefit Bulletins" periodically to help you better understand what is available to you and your dependents, and how we can help control costs.

The Health Insurance sector as a whole has seen a trend of increasing costs in the range of 10-15% per year. The NBTF Group Insurance Plan is no exception. This year, 2013, the NBTF Health and Drug plans experienced an increase in the monthly premiums. Any steps we take to help control health and drug plan claims will minimize the costs for the group as a whole, which in turn will help to contain the premiums paid by you.



In an effort to maintain a sustainable benefit plan, we ask that you consider the tips offered in this bulletin. Small actions taken now by each of us may help to avoid increased premiums and/or reduced coverage in the future.

### First Issue Focus... Prescription Drug Plan

Prescription Drugs account for over 80% of the total cost to the Health Plan. There are significant cost differences between brand name drugs and the generic versions of those drugs. Generic drugs can be 30-50% lower than the cost of a brand name.

The cost of each prescription filled is made up of three parts:

- 1) The ingredient cost of the medication;
- 2) A mark-up cost charged by the pharmacy; and
- 3) A dispensing fee charged by the pharmacy



Here are some tips that we can use to reduce drug related costs to our plan:

- ✓ For medications that you take on a regular basis, ask your doctor to prescribe a 90-day supply rather than a 30 day supply. That will save you the hassle of traveling to the pharmacy and filling prescriptions each month. It will also save on costs to the plan by reducing the amount of dispensing fees paid to pharmacies.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to ask your pharmacist how much they charge for a dispensing fee as this information may not be readily apparent on the receipt. The following is a table with the average dispensing fee for some cities in NB for the following pharmacies:

Pharmacy	Approximate Average Dispensing Fees (\$)
Shoppers	8.86
Lawtons	11.36
Jean Coutu	10.00
Walmart	7.80
Costco	4.49

Costco has the lowest dispensing fee of those sampled and you are not required to have a membership to use the pharmacy. If you are hesitant to switch pharmacists, simply ask your pharmacist if you can negotiate a better rate. They may be willing to lower their price.

- ✓ If you are taking a brand name drug ask your doctor and pharmacist if a substitution to the generic version is right for you. For example, the generic drug Rosuvastatin may be prescribed as an option to the brand name drug Crestor for managing cholesterol. Crestor is one of the top 5 prescription drugs in terms of cost, to the NBTF prescription drug plan.
- ✓ When considering any of these tips, remember to first consult with your family physician or pharmacist. Don't risk your wellbeing.

Your comments, questions, and suggestions are important. Don't hesitate to contact us at:

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