



connex

THE NEWSLETTER OF MINISTRY AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND SERVICES

New Health and Dental Benefits Carrier Report on Transition Issues

The transition to Green Shield was fairly seamless for most members. Thanks to everyone for their patience with and attention to the various communications we sent out. As noted in *Connex*, issue 19 (May 2009), the change was made to improve premium stabilization and customer service, and to give our members access to better claims systems. The provisions of our benefits plan did not change but two inconsistencies came to light once Green Shield started administering our plan.

1. Over-the-Counter (OTC) and Compounded Drugs

There are two main reasons why the United Church group benefits plan does not cover every health-related product. The Canada Revenue Agency regulates which drugs are eligible for reimbursement under an employer-sponsored plan. As the plan sponsor, the church has additional controls in place to ensure the plan remains affordable.

To be covered by the church's health plan, over-the-counter (OTC) drugs must: have a Drug Identification Number (DIN), be prescribed by your physician, be dispensed by a pharmacist, and be utilized to treat a chronic and life-threatening condition.

Coverage for compounded drugs, or drugs mixed by a pharmacist, is

based on each insurance company's compound-drug-policy guidelines, and all ingredients must be eligible under the plan. Green Shield's policies are different from Manulife's. Please contact Green Shield directly at 1-888-711-1119 if you have questions about coverage for compound or OTC drugs.

2. Per-prescription Costs and the Pensioner Plan

In a number of provinces, particularly Alberta, some pensioner members were not being assessed the \$5 per-prescription fee (instead of the full dispensing fee) in addition to the 20 percent copay. Now that Green Shield is administering our plan more accurately, this \$5 fee is added to the 20 percent copay for the cost of the drug, per the United Church plan document.

Example

A pensioner member requires Drug X, xxx mg.

Drug cost: \$126.33. Regular dispensing fee: \$11.99.

20% (copay) of drug cost + \$5 per-prescription fee = pensioner-member cost for prescription

20% (copay) of \$126.33 = \$25.27 + \$5.00 (fee) = \$30.27

The pensioner member pays \$30.27 for this prescription.

Prescriptions

Copay 101

Several members have remarked that with Green Shield they are paying more for their prescription claims. This brief explanation of copay provisions outlines what costs members are responsible for when filling prescriptions: in the core plan, members pay 20 percent (also called "copay") for brand-name or generic drugs plus the dispensing fee. Optional-plan members pay 10 percent (copay) of brand-name drugs plus the dispensing fee. The plan will pay only for the less expensive drug unless your physician has indicated that you must take the more expensive one.

Note: Brand-name drugs are generally more expensive than generic ones. Speak with your physician about generic alternatives that can save you money.

Example

A core-plan member has a prescription for Drug X, xxx mg.

Drug cost: \$126.33. Dispensing fee: \$11.99.

20% (copay) of drug cost + dispensing fee = core-plan member cost for prescription

20% (copay) of \$126.33 = \$25.27 + \$11.99 (dispensing fee) = \$37.26

The core-plan member pays \$37.26 for this prescription.

Benefits Information Management and the Payroll Service

As pastoral charges move to the payroll service administered by ADP, any changes to employee records are updated on the pension and benefits database according to information from ADP. Examples of this are adding a new employee, termination of an employee, changing salary amounts, name or address changes, etc.

Treasurers are to report all changes to ADP, not to the Pension and Benefits Centre. Changes should be made during the regular payroll input call. If your pastoral charge runs the payroll “as is,” please ensure that changes are given to ADP Client

Services (phone: 1-877-701-7017; fax: 1-877-701-7329) at least one full week before the payroll is issued.

For those pastoral charges that have moved to the payroll service but have elected to not enrol lay staff, changes for lay staff not on ADP should be processed through the Pension and Benefits Centre (1-888-657-4607).

Note: Invoicing will be administered through General Council Office, Human Resources Unit (call Henry Smal at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 1120).

For more information, visit the United Church website: www.united-church.ca. Search with the keywords “payroll support.”

Confirm Personal Information

All members of the pension and benefits plans of the United Church are encouraged to ensure their personal information is correct in the files at the United Church Pension and Benefits Centre. To do so, call the centre at 1-888-657-4607 or visit its website: www.united-church.hroffice.ca. It is especially important to check your address, as this database supplies the mailing lists for both *Connex* and *Foresight*.

It is also important for those working in a pastoral relations or treasurer role, and who have “administrator” access to this website, to be able to verify insurance coverage and other information for staff. This information is summarized on the About Me section of [\[church.hroffice.ca\]\(http://www.united-church.hroffice.ca\) \(see the menu at the left side of the webpage\).](http://www.united-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

IMPORTANT

Changes **must** be reported to ADP through a treasurer or payroll administrator. ADP information will override corrections made directly with the Pension and Benefits Centre.

Confidential Spousal Files Are Available

It is not always possible to be open about personal information. To support ministry personnel who may be uncomfortable with disclosing a same-gender-partner relationship to their employer, confidential spousal benefits files can be set up. Contact Christine McLean, Benefits Administration Supervisor, at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3116.

Updated “Summary of Coverage” Booklets

Updated versions of the group benefits plans “Summary of Coverage” booklets for both active and pensioner members are available from the United Church Pension and Benefits Centre. For your copy, call 1-888-657-4607 or go to www.united-church.ca, search the keywords “health benefits” to get to the main HR page, and then scroll down to the documents.

Salary and Allowances Schedule 2010

The Minimum Salary and Allowances Schedule 2010 was recently mailed to pastoral charges and ministry personnel. The information is also available on the United Church website (www.united-church.ca). Search the keywords “salary schedule,” or go to this link: www.united-church.ca/minstaff/pastoral/salary/schedule.

Since sending out the schedule, Human Resources has received a number of calls asking how the information is passed to the pastoral charge’s payroll service provider, ADP. Information regarding salaries remains the responsibility of the pastoral charge’s treasurer or payroll administrator. Increases to salaries or other changes are to be reported in the regular payroll input call to ADP.

The Human Resources Unit apologizes to the retired personnel who received the Salary and Allowances mailing in error. We regret any inconvenience or confusion this may have caused.

Cleanliness and Godliness

As talk of pandemic flu and drug-resistant infection continues, it is important to remember that pastoral visitors should take steps to keep congregants, friends, and family safe. Most important is washing your hands before and after visiting with persons who are sick. Consult staff when visiting hospitals or long-term-care facilities as additional prevention measures may be in place. For more information on limiting the spread of infection, contact a local health unit or provincial health ministry (found in the blue pages of your telephone directory).

Human Resources Unit

New Name, New Executive Officer

On May 1, 2009, the name of the Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Unit was changed to Human Resources. This change was made because “human resources” is simpler and more readily understood than “MEPS.” The work remains the same, only the name of the unit has changed! The Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS), the elected-member body whose work is supported by the Human Resources Unit, will keep its name.

Coincidentally, the Human Resources Unit will also have a new executive officer (previously

known as an executive minister). In May, Michael Burke announced that he had accepted a position at the Toronto French School. A search was conducted, resulting in the naming of the Rev. Alan Hall as Mr. Burke’s successor. As *Connex* readers know, Alan has been a long-standing member of PC-MEPS and, among other roles, has served as the communications representative for the Permanent Committee and as the editor of *Connex* for many years. Human Resources welcomed Alan to his new role at the General Council Office on September 1, 2009.



Photo: © 2006 Wolf Kunehorsky

Treasurers

Keep Up-to-Date

Updated information on the pastoral charge payroll service is added regularly to the United Church website in the Ongoing Support section of the Pastoral Charge Payroll Service pages. The support section can be found at: www.united-church.ca/minstaff/pastoral/payroll/support (or search using the keywords “ongoing support”). Recently posted here are the “New/Change Employee Sheet” and an improved “Understanding the Payroll Reports” pdf (easy to view or download).

Human Resources communicates these and any other published updates in *Connex* and Infopac and on the Church Leadership Network. If you are in a paid or volunteer leadership role in the United Church, please join the Church Leadership Network: <http://churchleadership.united-church.ca>.

On Relationships

I often joke that I never leave a place only once—I always seem to forget something (keys, briefcase, head!) and have to go back. Carol, who works at St. Mark’s where I have been minister, just shakes her head. When I said goodbye as editor of *Connex* and a member of the Permanent Committee last spring, however, I had no idea I would be back! And certainly not so soon!

Michael Burke’s decision to move on caught us off guard. He was such an able and highly respected leader. I am honoured to succeed him and look forward to working with the very capable staff in the Human Resources Unit as well as with the dedicated members of the Permanent Committee and the Pension Board.

Someone said to me, “You don’t even know what you don’t know about this new job.” It’s true; what I am learning a lot about these days is changing from one pastoral relation to another. It has been a while for me: 23 years. As many of you know from your own experiences, concluding a pastoral relationship is filled with emotion and a sense of loss even as it is also filled with anticipation and excitement about new opportunities. When asked how I could possibly have stayed in one church so long, I replied that it was simple—I always tried to remember that it is about relationship. Sure, it is a job and the church is one’s employer, but it is more, far more. It is a living, breathing, giving, taking, growing, and ever-changing relationship. Attention to this, patience with it, and respect for it by both ministry personnel and the congregation makes ministry the blessed privilege that I’ve experienced.

I hope that in my new role, as I find out what I don’t even know I don’t know yet, I will have the opportunity to ensure that our larger practices and services work to support the sort of rich, generous pastoral relationships that I am so grateful to have known.

—Alan Hall

In September the Permanent Committee will appoint a new editor for Connex.

ADP Service Fees

No Changes

A key consideration in selecting a payroll service provider was keeping service fees as affordable as possible, in recognition of the financial burden pastoral charges already face. In comparison with the other payroll service providers that were considered, ADP's service fees were the most affordable.

Although our current service agreement with ADP stipulates that service fees are guaranteed only until September 2009, we are very pleased to announce that ADP service fees will not increase in September. In light of many factors, not the least of which is the current economic climate, ADP will extend our current rates to July 1, 2010.

Preparing for Year-End 2009 with ADP

In October, to expedite production of employee T4s/Relevés by ADP, the Human Resources Unit will send all pastoral charges that process their payroll through ADP the 2009 Year-End Notice and the 2010 ADP To-Do Checklist. These communications highlight important due dates and key information treasurers will be required to pass on to ADP. If you have not received these communications by October 30, please contact Lee Corlett in the Human Resources Unit (call 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3118 or e-mail PC-MEPS@united-church.ca).

By early November, you will also receive your Year-End Package from ADP. The package will include an ADP Procedures Guide and T4/Relevé Trial Run. We strongly urge you to review the T4/Relevé Trial Run provided by ADP and to make any corrections by the dates specified in the 2009 Year-End Notice.

Note: Service fees will be charged to your account for late submission of data.

Monitoring ADP

Service and Services

It has been over two years since St. Paul's International Pastoral Charge in Estevan, Saskatchewan, ran the first payroll processed through ADP. Now about 75 percent of pastoral charges have moved to ADP. The Human Resources staff meets weekly with the ADP management team to monitor processes and determine where and how improvements can be made. Issues brought forward by treasurers are discussed and solutions found. When a problem is presented to ADP, the compensation team has noticed that the ADP staff is quick to investigate and resolve the situation.

If you have a situation that ADP has not been able to resolve, please contact Lee Corlett (call 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3118 or e-mail PC-MEPS@united-church.ca) or Carolyn McBean (call 306-586-3565 or e-mail ucpayrollproject@sasktel.net). The issue will be discussed at the next team meeting and you will be notified of the outcome.



40th General Council / 40^e Conseil général
The United Church of Canada / L'Église Unie du Canada

Proposals at GC40

A number of proposals related to programs and policies administered at the General Council Office were forwarded to General Council for consideration and debate. Visit the GC40 website at: <http://gc40.united-church.ca>.

Prioritize Vacation and Leave Time

Ministry personnel serving pastoral charges and other ministry units, such as outreach ministries that are accountable to presbytery, receive a remuneration package that includes a month of vacation.

Vacation time is very important for the health of a pastoral relationship, allowing for rest and rejuvenation. Ministers and pastoral charges are strongly encouraged to ensure that time is set aside for leaves each pastoral year; there is no provision within the pastoral relations system for either vacation or study leave to be paid out in cash.

Having trouble fitting vacation time into the church calendar? A useful tool is a time budget, similar to the financial budget pastoral charges and ministry units prepare each year. Outline the liturgical year, programs, special Sundays, and vacation and study leave times for all staff.

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Connex is the newsletter of the General Council Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services and of the Human Resources Unit. For additional copies to circulate to your M&P committee, church board, or congregation members, or to receive e-mail notification when a new issue is online instead of a print copy, contact us at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161 or PC-MEPS@united-church.ca.

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