

Prime Time Winter 2023

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Pension Plan Retirees
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Protecting our College Pension Plan
and other related pension benefits for
the benefit of current and future retirees.



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Members of the CPPR are grateful to live, work, and be in relation with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples from across many traditional and unceded territories, covering all regions of British Columbia. We are honoured to live on this land and are committed to reconciliation, decolonization, and building relationships in our communities.

Prime Time is published twice a year. If you would like to contribute an article or images, please contact Mary at president@cppr.ca.

President's Greeting

When I got up this morning and listened to the radio reporting all the traffic delays, I'm afraid I indulged in no little satisfaction as I sipped my coffee and relished the fact I no longer have to commute to work. I expect I'm not alone in being asked, "When are you really going to retire?" For many of us, the move from paid employment frees us to pursue more of our interests outside of the classroom. In fact, many people report how they find themselves busier in retirement than they were at work. What enables us to pursue the dreams and plans we made while still working is the security we have from our jointly trustee defined benefit pension plan and the commitment the pension partners have made to ensuring that our pension benefits are protected from inflation, even though cost of living increases are not part of the basic pension promise.

You'll see that several articles in this issue of *Prime Time* talk in more detail about this issue, which is extremely important to us. As those of you who were able to attend the AGM know, our members directed the executive "to work closely with plan partners to ensure any changes in policy affecting the CPP be discussed with CPPR." I immediately wrote to all the partners informing them of this decision.

You will also see as part of this newsletter the full text of a submission prepared by CPPR's Liaison committee which was sent to FPSE. Particular thanks are due to our trustee, Paul Ramsey and to Brenda Appleton, retiree member of FPSE's Pension Advisory Committee (PAC), for all the work they are doing to ensure that ensuring current and future retirees' well-being is the driving force behind decisions made about our pension. Thanks, too, are due to those members of CPPR and to active members of the plan who raised this issue with us. You can be sure that we will continue to remind all the partners that active members become retired members of the plan and that decisions made now affect the lives of all members.

The other major focus of this issue is travel, and we are very grateful to Bitu Jenab, Director, Research & Analysis, College Pension Board of Trustees, for her article on what we really need to consider when we are choosing travel insurance. You'll see that in his "Treasurer's Corner" John Wilson also explains why he has made his choice.

This issue also contains updates on the activities of two of the retiree institutions who have affiliated with us, BCITRA and LCAR, and a greeting from the Municipal Pension Retirees' Association. Don't forget, if your former institution has a retiree group, then it may affiliate with CPPR and send a representative to our executive board meetings and have a vote at the AGM.

I should also take this opportunity to update you on CPPR's other activities. John Wilson, I, and director Gordon Lee will be attending the SHARE summit in Vancouver. According to SHARE's website, "The 2023 event will support investment decision-makers in exploring opportunities for coordinated and impactful investor action in the context of environmental, social and governance pathways" (<https://share.ca/event/share-summit-the-power-of-many/>). Events such as this allow us to meet with those who make pension investments and to remind them that pensioners are vitally concerned not only about their own financial security but also about how the contributions they made during their working lives are invested.

Zoom meetings with the National Pensioners' Federation (NPF), take place about every two months and I continue to attend them. Discussions with the other public sector pension plan retiree groups also continue, and we have now been able to have two in-person meetings. I and George Davison attended the "summit" in Vancouver in November, and John Wilson and I attended a smaller meeting in Tsawwassen earlier in January. I continue to work with our office support, Downtown Office Services, with our webmaster, and with the other table officers in the day-to-day administration of our organization.

As you will know if you've visited our website, at our AGM we said thank you to Dennis Anderson for all his work as a table



officer for CPPR both as president and vice-president. He was elected as a director and will continue co-ordinating our pre-retirement workshop program. Danny Bradford, a long-time member and board member of CPPR, as well as a past trustee of our pension plan was elected as Vice-President, and we welcome Adrienne Chan from UFV as a new director.

I trust you will find this issue of *Prime Time* informative and interesting and hope that February is not too late to wish you a happy and prosperous 2023. It is not too late to recognise the new lunar year of the rabbit. I understand that the rabbit is associated with longevity, calm, peace, and prosperity and I wish all of those to us all.

Mary L. Griffin, President



From Photo by Susan Weber

Thoughts on our Pensions

CPPR Advocating for College Pension Plan Retirees Regarding their Pension Protections

As of the College Pension Plan August 31, 2021 actuarial valuation, the College Pension Plan is the fourth largest public pension plan in British Columbia with assets of approximately \$6.5 billion. The Plan's Inflation Adjustment Account (IAA), which is designated to pay annual indexing of pensions currently sits at approximately \$1.5 billion. As a result of the latest valuation, the plan's basic account has a surplus of \$200 million.

The College Pension Plan membership of 33,000 consists of approximately 16,700 (50.3%) active members, 9,400 (28.5%) retired members and 7,000 (21.2%) inactive members.

The College Pension Plan is funded by Plan Members and Employers who make financial contributions throughout their college careers and is designed so that each generation pays in advance for their own pension benefits and when it comes time to receive a pension it is the contributions plus the investment return over the years of their careers that has pre-funded the pension that they will receive in retirement. Approximately 25 cents of every dollar retired members receive comes from their and their employers' contributions – while the remaining 75 cents comes from the investment returns.

The College Pension Plan's Board of Trustees are entrusted to manage the financial health of the plan and the Trustees are appointed by the

From
**CPPR VP Danny Bradford,
Trustee Paul Ramsey, and
The CPPR Liaison Committee**

Plan Partners who are the BC General Employee's Union, the Federation of Post Secondary Educators of BC, the Post Secondary Employers' Association and the Provincial Government.

Since our inception, the CPPR has been actively involved in advocating for College Pension Plan Retirees pension protections and improvements such as



- Inflation Adjustment Account (IAA) Improvements (negotiated funding improvement)
 - Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) from capped to full inflation (2023 6.5%)
 - The IAA financial position will be reassessed at the next valuation (August 31, 2024)
- Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums were eliminated
 - College Pension Plan Retirees not required to pay premium
- Extended Health Benefits (EHB) Plan
 - Striving to return to some form of premium subsidization
 - Lobbying for a National Pharmacare Program
- Dental Plans
- Travel Insurance Plans
- Collaboration with other BC Public Pension Plan Retirees Associations

The CPPR advocates that 9,400 Retired Members, approximately 29% of the College Pension Plan members, should have serious input to any future Benefit changes made to the

Plan by the Board of Trustees and any plan benefits being negotiated by the Plan Partners.

The CPPR pays close attention to how plan surpluses are distributed. As an example, what happened to the \$200 million surplus?

- The Plan's Joint Trust Agreement (JTA) directs the plan's Trustees to move half of the surplus to the plan's rate stabilization account so that fund account can be used to offset future contribution rate increases. (\$100 million)
- The other half of the surplus will be moved to the Inflation adjustment account (IAA) to further strengthen its financial position. (\$100 million) This is the account that currently sits at approximately \$1.5 billion and pays out annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) to retirees.

I would like to note that the CPPR Table Officers and Directors are totally volunteers and receive no honorariums for their service. Membership fees are only used for operating expenses to further the goals of pension plan issues.

Also, I would like to recognize Paul Ramsey who is a CPPR Director and the Retiree Trustee on the College Board of Trustees who works diligently on behalf of our association and the College Pension Plan.

In closing, I would like to ask all of our CPPR members to reach out to any College Pension Plan Retirees you know of that are not currently CPPR members and encourage them to join our association so that we can further grow and strengthen our association to represent and solicit their relevant input on plan issues.

Let me know if you have any questions or suggestions.

*Danny Bradford, Vice President
Association of BC College Pension Plan
Retirees (CPPR)
danbradford@shaw.ca*

From the Board Table: Inflation

Inflation is much on my mind. I suspect I'm far from unique in that preoccupation. When I was recently doing some grocery shopping and came across a cauliflower costing \$10, it became not just an over-priced vegetable but a bit of a symbol for me of the times we're in. And it wasn't even an organic or locally grown vegetable!



2023 is upon us, and our pension plan's trustees have approved two changes to benefits available to us retirees. Both changes reflect the inflationary times we're in.

First, the premiums for Greenshield's group health and dental plans, which many of us are enrolled in, are going up: up 5.2% for health premiums, and up 12.5% for dental premiums.

COLA 2023 is 6.5%

Insurance premiums are not immune to inflationary pressures. While the COVID pandemic reduced the use of supplemental health and dental services, the use and cost of those services has rebounded with a vengeance.

Second, as of January 1, we received a 6.5% cost of living increase to our pensions. Our College Pension Plan calculates yearly increases in the cost of living in the same way the Canada Pension Plan does. While we are all aware that some of our expenses are rising faster than 6.5% a year, both plans see this as a good measure of full inflation protection.

This COLA increase was approved at the same time the Board of Trustees received an update on the investment climate and current performance of our plan's assets. As of December, the annual rate of return on investments was -3.0%. While negative investment returns are never welcome, that number may look pretty good compared to

what has been happening to many of our personal investments. More importantly, the 5-year rate of return still stood at a healthy annual rate of 7.3%.

So, if investment returns are negative, how can our pension plan afford to provide full inflation protection to retirees? And how long can this non-guaranteed benefit continue?

Answering those questions requires some examination of the structure of our pension plan. A significant chunk of the plan's assets (nearly \$1.5 billion) is set aside in the Inflation Adjustment Account (the IAA). This account is used to fund COLAs (Cost of Living Adjustments). When a COLA is approved, funds from the IAA are transferred to the basic account to cover this increase for all future pension payments.



“close to \$300 million transferred to IAA”

Funds in the IAA come from several sources. First, active members of the plan contribute to the IAA. Total member contributions to the College Pension Plan are 10.24% of salary; of that 1.85% goes into the IAA. Employers make a matching contribution.

Second, just like funds in the basic account, IAA assets are invested and make money. Those returns on investment stay in the IAA. Investment returns have been pretty healthy for several years and have contributed to the very positive current balance.

Third, the last two actuarial valuations—in 2018 and 2021—showed our plan's assets were considerably larger than its liabilities (pensions to be paid now and into the future). A big chunk of the surplus—close to \$300 million—was transferred to the IAA.

The fourth stream of IAA assets is a bit more complex to explain: it's called an excess interest transfer. Our plan needs a return on investments of around 6.25% per year to pay current and future pensions; returns above that level are in “excess” of the plan's requirements. Part of that excess in the basic account is attributable to

earnings from retirees' contributions. And that portion of the “excess interest” is transferred annually to the IAA.

This is all a bit complex, and I've skimmed over a few other wrinkles in IAA funding. The bottom line, however, is clear: in 2021 the actuarial valuation showed that the plan could grant COLAs which covered the full cost of inflation. In accordance with this finding and with the plan's Joint Trust Agreement, the trustees approved a COLA of 2.7% in 2022, and now a COLA of 6.5% in 2023.

What we always need to remember, however, is that COLAs are not a guaranteed benefit. They depend on money available in the IAA. In the past, trustees have had to “cap” COLAs at a level which was lower than full CPI but which was “sustainable.” We hope that won't have to be done in the future. The next time trustees will examine what level of COLA funding the IAA can support will be after the 2024 valuation.

Circumstances that could threaten full inflation protection are pretty obvious: an extended period of low investment returns would be bad for both the IAA and for the fund in general.

Similarly, if current efforts by central banks to tame inflation by raising interest rates fail, the level of inflation could be higher than COLAs from the IAA can cover.

Most of us have lived through a period of high and persistent inflation; we don't want to experience that again. Our pensions and the recent COLA help us cope with the inflation we're currently living with—including overpriced vegetables!

I hope this explanation of COLAs and the IAA is useful to you. In my first six years as a trustee, the College Pension Plan's assets increased at a very healthy rate and benefits for retirees improved. As I begin my third term, I suspect that my last three years as a trustee could be more challenging. If you have any questions, I would be pleased to try to answer them.

Paul Ramsey, Retiree Trustee
ramsey@shaw.ca

Advocating for Inflation Protection

At the AGM in November, members expressed concern over information they'd received that one of the pension partners The Federation of Post Secondary Educators (FPSE) was, as part of an exercise in bringing its policy manual up to date, considering removing its policy committing the federation to supporting inflation protection for retirees. Members passed the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Executive of ABC CPPR be directed to work closely with plan partners to ensure any changes in policy affecting the CPP be discussed with CPPR, and that the CPPR rep to FPSE's PAC report back.

Our president wrote to all the partners informing them of this motion. We later received from concerned active members of the plan documents showing some of the suggested changes to policies surrounding FPSE's commitment to ensuring that retirees' pensions were protected against inflation.

CPPR's Liaison committee, (the table officers plus our trustee, Paul Ramsey, and Brenda Appleton, a retired members of FPSE's Pension Advisory Committee) prepared a response to the proposed changes.

That response was sent on 13 January to Chris Jaeger, Chair of FPSE's Policy Committee, and to Bryan Breguet, Chair of the Pension Advisory Committee. To date (28 January) we have received no acknowledgement.

You can be sure your executive will continue to monitor this situation and take appropriate action on behalf of all current and future retirees. As we commented in our cover email to Chris Jaeger and Bryan Breguet, "All members of the pension plan, whether active or retired, have a strong interest in knowing that their post retirement incomes, health benefits, and overall welfare are secure and protected."

Particular thanks are due to Brenda Appleton and Paul Ramsey for their work on our behalf on this issue.

The full text of our response is included in this newsletter on pages .

Mary L. Griffin, President

At the Annual General Meeting: Left to Right: Maureen Shaw, John Wilson, and Paul Ramsey.

Photo: Susan Weber



**Response to Proposed Changes to FPSE Policy on Pensions
Submitted January 2023**

**By
CPPR Liaison Committee
to
FPSE's Policy and Pension Advisory Committees**



The Association of College Pension Plan Retirees (CPPR) speaks for major stakeholders in the College Pension Plan, the retirees. At CPPR's last AGM in November, its members directed its executive to "work closely with plan partners" if any changes in policy about the College Pension Plan were being considered by any of the plan partners. From documents and information shared with CPPR, we understand that FPSE is contemplating updating its Policy and Procedures Manual including major changes to policies concerning pensions, and that the Policy Committee has asked for feedback in writing on the proposed revisions. We are, therefore, in the spirit of solidarity between active and retired members of the plan sharing our concerns with the Policy Committee and with PAC.

Trustees: Their Compensation, Appointment, and Terms

1. Compensation

- a) Being a trustee of the College Pension Plan is a highly demanding responsibility and includes far more than simply attending board meetings and FPSE committee meetings. Any FPSE policy regarding Trustees' time release from instructional duties must reflect the acknowledgement that Board responsibilities demand the equivalent of anything between a quarter to half of the time commitment of a full-time regular faculty position.
- b) Given an FPSE staff representative's ongoing familiarity with the federation and with its locals, there are definite advantages to one of the FPSE appointed trustees being an FPSE staff representative.

2. Appointment and Terms—Especially the Retiree Trustee

- a) It is surely of concern to all stakeholders active or retired that the appointment of any FPSE appointed trustee is given entirely to the president after "consultation with PAC and PC." As written, this wording suggests that the president need not take the recommendations of any of the committees with whom he/she/they "consult." Wording more reflective of a collective appointment would be appropriate.
- b) According to the suggested revision, a trustee is limited to serving for only two terms. There appears to be no such limit in the JTA. Also, precedent has been set by Paul Ramsey's being reappointed to a third term. Why the change?

Further, there are distinct advantages to allowing a trustee to serve more than two consecutive terms given the value of accumulated experience and consequent expertise gained by anyone willing to serve longer than six years.

- c) Of particular interest to retirees is the process for appointing the Retiree Trustee.
 - i) Referring to such trustee as a retired trustee suggests said person has retired from being a trustee. In fact, said person would be an active trustee while being a retired member of the plan.
 - ii) See earlier note 2b above on terms.
 - iii) A welcome change to past practice is the revisions to policy surrounding the appointment of the Retiree Trustee. It is highly appropriate that CPPR, the

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association representing retired members of the plan, will receive a nomination package and will make its recommendation to the nomination sub-committee.

However, when it comes to the collaboration between the GEU and FPSE, some more detail may be necessary.

Despite the introductory section asserting that “FPSE and BCGEU are collectively entitled to one retired trustee on the Plan’s Board . . .” the following clauses, *unlike the old clauses*, do not fully outline the arrangements made between FPSE and BCGEU. Instead, what follows is a process of setting up an FPSE nomination sub-committee that includes *only* active members of the plan who are members of FPSE committees.

Perhaps a solution here would be for the nomination sub-committee to be made up of the presidents, or their designates, of FPSE, BCGEU, and CPPR together with the Chairs of PC and PAC or their designates. Such a committee would reflect the interests of both active and retired members of the plan and reflect the mandate given by the JTA that the appointment of the retiree trustee be made jointly by both union partners.

Inflation Protection and Benefits

We are most concerned about the apparent omission of any detailed policy committing FPSE to protect retirees against inflation and to ensuring the availability of post-retirement health and dental benefits for retirees, whether those, ideally subsidised, benefits are offered through a Pension Corporation administered plan, through the continuation of institutional benefit plans negotiated on behalf of individual locals, or through any other scheme. These apparent omissions are causing no little anxiety not only for current retirees but also for future retirees, today’s active members of the plan.

The policy manual of FPSE is a document that establishes the aspirational goals of FPSE as a sponsoring partner of the College Pension Plan. The JTA is a partner approved document allowing the trustees to fulfil specified tasks and responsibilities.

Under the JTA, trustees cannot increase benefits that have a net cost to the partners. Therefore, a partner committed to the welfare of its members in retirement will outline its aspirational goals to support inflation protection and expanded health plans, for example, in its own policy. Therefore, we urge FPSE to include written policies that affirm that

FPSE supports guaranteed full inflation protection

and that

FPSE supports subsidized extended health care.

We will be happy to discuss these issues further at PAC, PC, or with the Policy Committee, so please do not hesitate to contact any member of our Liaison Committee.

Mary L. Griffin, President and Liaison Committee Chair	president@cprr.ca
Danny Bradford, Vice-President	vicepresident@cprr.ca
George Davison, Secretary	secretary@cprr.ca
John Wilson, Treasurer	treasurer@cprr.ca
Brenda Appleton, Director	brenda.appleton@gmail.com
Paul Ramsey, Director	ramsey@shaw.ca

News from Other Groups

BCITRA Plans for the Future

December and January are busy months for the BCITRA with members contributing to our Student Bursary Fund and paying their 2023 membership Dues. As well the Board is looking at a survey to members to check on their needs/wants in particular for Social, Volunteering, and Board Membership.

As well, the Board is looking at and planning for the AGM in June. As well the need to continue the conversion to the use of BCIT technology is a high priority and requires the use of BCIT experts as well as our own members' participation.

Gordon Farrell

LCAR Meets Langara's New President and Elects New Board Members

The LCAR AGM was held on September 22nd 2023. Dr. Paula Burns, Langara's new President and CEO met informally with our board and spoke at the AGM. She introduced herself, told of her professional journey before coming to Langara, and summarized the work completed during her orientation period. Dr. Burns then provided an overview of her goals for the College in the future. She will be featured in an article in our next newsletter, which we hope to publish in February 2023. This will be available at: <https://lcar.ca/news-events/>

At our AGM we elected four board members for a term of office from 2022-2024. We also have five continuing board members in office until 2023. Ken Jillings stepped down after several years of generous service. In October, at the first meeting after the AGM, Diane Bradley was confirmed as chair and Patricia Cia was elected as vice chair of LCAR. No workshops were

BCITRA, KPURA, LCAR, and SFURA are affiliated with CPPR.

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Email us at info@cppr.ca for more information.



offered over the summer. Langara awarded three retirees, Frank Williams, Patty Moore and Harry Lendvay emeritus/emerita status in 2022.

The board met again on January 20th 2023. Our projects include completion of our latest newsletter and an upcoming Grand Gala evening of entertainment to be held on Tuesday, April 11th in the Studio 58 theatre at Langara. This will be a paid event with the proceeds of tickets going towards the support of the Studio 58 theatre program. Details will be available on the LCAR webpage as soon as they are finalized.

Diane Bradley

Links to our Affiliate Groups

BCITRA	bcitra.ca
KPURA	kpu.ca/retirees
LCAR	lcar.ca
SFURA	sfu.ca/retirees



Public Sector Retiree Groups

The Four Presidents take time for a photo opportunity

From Left to Right

Arnie Lambert, BCRTA; Brian Green, BCGREA; Mary L. Griffin, CPPR, and Terry Erskine, MPRA.

Photo BCRTA

Do You Know Someone who receives a BC Public Pension?

If you know someone who draws a pension from the Teachers', Public Service, or Municipal Pension Plan, then tell them about the BC Government Retired Employees' Association (BCGREA), the Retired Teachers' Association (BCRTA), and the Municipal Pension Plan Retirees' Association (MPRA) and encourage them to join their retiree association.

The four public sector retiree associations share a focus on the well-being and security of the retired members of each plan, and we have been meeting virtually for the past two years to share ideas. We all agreed on the value of our discussions, and in November, representatives from all four associations met in person for the first time in Vancouver at the Holiday Inn on Broadway. We met again recently to discuss our communications strategies.

In what I hope will be the first of greetings from the other associations, Terry Erskine from the MPRA has written us a column explaining how he recruited a member for CPPR. I have already persuaded a neighbour to join MPRA.

So if you have a spouse, ex-colleague, friend, or neighbour who receives a BC public pension, tell them about how important it is to support the organizations that advocate on behalf of the retired members of our pension plans and direct them to the appropriate place.

BCGREA bcrgrea.ca

BCRTA bcрта.ca

MPRA mpra.ca

And, of course, if you know a retired ex-colleague, who's a member of our plan but not yet a member of CPPR, then direct them to our website cppr.ca where they can easily find our on-line membership form.

The November Summit

Photo BCRTA



L-R: Tim Anderson (Executive Director, BCRTA), Patrick Harkness (Communications, BCGREA), Al Barclay (Membership, BCGREA), Arnie Lambert (President, BCRTA), Gerry Tiede (Benefits, BCRTA), Brian Green (President, BCGREA), Mary L. Griffin (President, CPPR), Howard Brown (Communications, MPRA), Terry Erskine (President, MPRA), George Davison (Secretary, CPPR), Grace Wilson (Past President, BCRTA), Vincent Sherry (1st Vice-President, BCGREA), Mark Costales (Johnson Insurance), Lisa Hansen (Johnson).



Thoughts From MPRA

I would like to introduce myself to the members of the CPPR. My name is Terry Erskine and I'm the President of the Municipal Pension Retiree's Association (MPRA). I have been asked by your Association to share a few thoughts about how the retiree groups are working together on behalf of the members. Your Association, the B C Government Retirees Association, the B C Retired Teachers Association, and the MPRA have been meeting for over 2 years, and these sessions have been a great forum to share ideas. Rather than looking at the 12,000 members in our association, I look at the strength in the 45,000 members in all four associations. We meet approximately every two months either by Zoom or in person.

One project we have taken on is to promote the other Retiree Associations in our newsletters and face to face discussions. For example, last night I attended a musical rehearsal and had a discussion with one of the other participants. The subject came around to retiring and where we used to work. She told me that she had been an instructor at Camosun College. I then asked her if she belonged to the CPPR, which she did. I went on to tell her about our joint meetings and how impressed I was with her association and the work they were doing. It really is beneficial for us all to promote the benefits of the other retiree groups to help expand our individual growth. Our organizations are not in competition with each other but rather are members of the public sector pension plans that have separate and individual target groups.

I know your association is smaller than ours; however, when we meet, we are equals trying with collective wisdom to make things better by working together in the best interest of all our members.

*Terry Erskine,
President, MPRA*

Treasurer's Corner: John Considers our COLA, Website, and Travel Insurance

6.5% COLA (Cost of Living Increase)

COLA increases in my College Pension make me happy and thankful.

- COLA increases I have received are fully funded.
I will continue to receive the COLA increased pension value for as long as I or my spouse receive pension payments.
- Fourth year in a row of receiving a full COLA increase, calculated in the same manner as the Canada Pension Plan.
- I increase my charitable donations to charities for those facing challenges in their lives, because I am getting more myself. I am one of the lucky ones with a good pension.

I like our new website – VISIT -- cpr.ca

Treasurer's Corner continues on page 16



Photo: mlg

Ten things to consider when buying travel insurance

As COVID restriction ease, more retirees are travelling again. Buying travel insurance can give you peace of mind if you choose the coverage that is right for you.

If you have coverage for health and/or dental benefits under the College Pension Plan post-retirement Group Benefits, you can access optional medical travel insurance offered by Green Shields Canada (GSC).

Here are 10 things to consider when buying travel insurance.

1. Your government health plan coverage

Government health plans may not cover all emergency medical expenses once you leave your home province of residence, and typically cover only a limited portion of medical services and fees once you leave the country. Find out what your provincial health plan covers, and whether you need private medical travel insurance to fill any gaps. Click [here](#) to learn more about what is covered under the B.C. Medical Services Plan (MSP).



2. Types of travel insurance

There are two types of travel insurance to be aware of: 1) coverage for emergency medical expenses while traveling outside your province of residence, and 2) comprehensive travel insurance covering trip cancellation/interruption, loss of baggage, air flight accident, and other ancillary travel risks. Many services covered under comprehensive travel packages are also commonly covered under credit card / affinity group insurance products. Therefore, before you consider buying comprehensive travel insurance, it may be worth first reviewing what your credit card /affinity group insurance covers.

GSC's group travel insurance plan covers emergency medical expenses only. Ancillary travel costs such as trip cancellation/interruption, etc. are not covered under GSC's group travel insurance plan.

3. Medical evidence

Some but not all private insurance companies require you to complete a medical questionnaire in order to assess eligibility for emergency medical travel insurance. Coverage may be denied, or higher premiums may apply if you are deemed to be high risk.



GSC's group travel insurance plan does not require medical evidence, however, a 90-day stability of pre-existing conditions clause applies. Moreover, unless the medical emergency is accidental in nature, medical records are typically requested at time of incident to confirm if treatment is for a pre-existing condition that was not completely stable for the 90-day period immediately preceding the insured's departure.

4. Direct (first payor) or indirect pay

If you are faced with a medical emergency while travelling, it is important to know whether the insurance company will pay physician and hospital claims directly (first payor), or whether you will be out of pocket before you file a claim and receive reimbursement (indirect pay or second payor). Some insurance companies directly pay for emergency medical expenses in and/or outside Canada and collect any coordination of benefit amounts from other carriers and provincial health plans, if applicable.

GSC's group travel insurance plan pays the medical providers directly (first payor) for emergency out-of-country expenses. Note, GSC's group retiree extended health plan for members of the College Pension Plan covers any in-Canada emergency expenses up to the plan's lifetime maximum (also as first payor).

5. Single or multiple trip and trip duration considerations

Travel insurance can be purchased for single or multiple trips and premiums can vary by covered trip duration. Single trip plans are appropriate for those who take one annual vacation. If you vacation multiple times in one year, or like to take advantage of last-minute travel deals, you may wish to consider multiple trip plans. How long you plan to travel should also be taken into consideration when purchasing travel coverage.

GSC's group travel insurance plan is a multiple trip plan. As for duration of your trips, you must select either the 30-day or the 60-day trip duration option. In other words, you can take multiple trips each year, but each trip needs to be completed within 30 or 60 days, depending on the option you selected. You must maintain coverage for a minimum of 12 months before coverage can be changed or cancelled.

6. Deductibles, limits, overall maximums

You should carefully consider provisions that may limit reimbursement of your claim. Deductibles, limits on amounts reimbursed for a particular type of expense, overall maximums placed on expenses incurred per trip are designed to limit the insurance company's risk. A travel insurance with a high deductible and low overall maximum may have a lower premium rate, but it may not save you money in the long run. Make sure you have adequate coverage.

GSC's group travel insurance plan has no deductible and an overall maximum per trip of \$5,000,000. Some benefits such as services of a registered private nurse or meals and accommodation for you and your companion are subject to a per incidence limit.

7. Exclusions

Most travel insurance policies have limitations and exclusions. For example, certain high-risk activities such as rock climbing or parachuting may not be covered, or certain countries or regions may be excluded. Make sure you discuss your travel plans with your insurer.

GSC's group travel insurance plan does not cover medical conditions that are a result of excessive use of alcohol or drugs, certain high-risk activities, or a pre-existing condition that has not been stable for 90-days prior to date of departure. For a complete list of exclusions please refer to GSC's booklet/insurance contract.



8. Medical evacuation

You want to make sure that the policy you purchase covers medical evacuation to Canada or to the nearest location with appropriate medical care. The policy should also cover the cost of a medical escort to your final destination.

GSC's group travel insurance plan covers the cost of land ambulance to the nearest medical facility. Subject to pre-approval of your provincial health plan, the cost of the air ambulance between hospitals or for admission into a hospital in Canada is covered.

9. Repatriation in case of death

In the event of death, you want to make sure that the policy you purchase covers the preparation and return of your remains to Canada.

GSC's group travel insurance plan covers up to a maximum of \$5,000 for the return of your remains to an airport nearest your point of departure.

10. Emergency contact center

In the event of a medical emergency, you will need help finding the right care. You also need someone to help you navigate the local medical system, whether it is as a translator or as a guarantor for the medical providers, confirming that you have adequate coverage to receive the required medical treatment. Make sure your insurer has an in-house, worldwide, 24-hour/7-day emergency contact center.

GSC's group travel insurance plan offers a worldwide, 24 hours per day/7 days per week emergency contact center with access to multilingual assistance specialists.

Prepared by: Bitu Jenab
Director, College Pension Plan



Treasurer's Corner continued from page 12

Travel Insurance – good luck in finding the right fit for you – May you never have to claim.

My thanks to Bitu Jenab, Director, College Pension Plan, for her good article on “Ten things to consider when buying travel insurance.”

Last year I made my own analysis of my needs for travel insurance and chose to go with Johnson's MEDOC plan an affinity partner with CPPR.

I have prepared a summary of the features in MEDOC compared to Green Shields Canada (GSC). Different features have different costs. Each of you will have to do similar analysis with whatever insurer you decide to consider.

The four main differences are

- MEDOC takes a comprehensive approach (emergency medical, trip cancellation or interruption, baggage loss) . GSC is emergency medical only.
- MEDOC is available to all members of the plan. GSC is only available to members who have signed up for GSC benefits from the College Pension Plan.
- MEDOC costs more because more is covered.
- MEDOC standard plans available to all are 17 or 35 day plans. GSC plans are 30 or 60 days.

John Wilson, Treasurer



Connections

USEFUL LINKS: If these links don't work, copy and paste them into your web browser.

College Pension Plan

Home Page: <http://www.pensionsbc.ca>

Other Direct Links from their site

My Account: <https://collegepensions.ca/register-for-for-my-account?inheritRedirect=true>

GreenShield Information: <https://onlineservices.greenshield.ca/publicbooklets/cpp.pdf>

EHC Premiums: <https://college.pensionsbc.ca/extended-health-care-plan-premiums>

Dental Premiums: <https://college.pensionsbc.ca/dental-plan-premium>

Taxes and Pension Payments: <https://college.pensionsbc.ca/taxes-and-pension-payments>

Pension Life: <https://college.pensionsbc.ca/pension-life>

Death and death benefits: <https://college.pensionsbc.ca/death-and-death-benefits>

Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/home.shtml>

Groups with whom we're affiliated

CPPA www.policyalternatives.ca

Council of Senior Citizens of BC

<http://coscobic.ca>

CURAC/ARUC <https://curac.ca>

National Pensioners' Federation

<http://www.nationalpensionersfederation.ca>

KNOW an ex-colleague who's about to retire?

REMEMBER, while other retiree organizations may offer similar travel and other insurance options, they cannot speak on our behalf.

Only CPPR SPEAKS FOR RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE BC COLLEGE PENSION PLAN. Ontario based organizations cannot advocate on your behalf in regard to your pension plan.,

ENCOURAGE your ex-colleagues to **JOIN CPPR** now and strengthen the voices in support of our Pension Plan and our benefits. Membership forms are available on our website cppr.ca

To update your own information,

Email us at info@cppr.ca

Phone 1-844-655-6565 or

Write to us at

3-2424 Main Street, West Kelowna, BC

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