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Happy New Year...and let the changes begin.

January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 the **NEW OHIP +** came into effect for Ontario. Under the plan all persons 24 years and under with a valid health card covered under OHIP are automatically covered under **OHIP +**; Child and youth Pharmacare.

**OHIP+** covers the cost of approximately 4400 drug products currently available through the Ontario Drug Benefit Program (Many of you may be familiar with the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) providing drug coverage for individuals 65 & over).

OHIP+ is to be the first payor ahead of group plan coverage. There is no dispensing fee, copay or deductible for OHIP+. Regretfully like many government initiatives the roll out seems to be a little premature from a preparation perspective. Drugs not currently covered by the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) are a little more complex as there is a format to apply for coverage under the Exceptional Access Program (EAP) (yes the industry now has a second EAP in addition to the original EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PLAN, which we are now to call EFAP, Employee & Family Assistance Programs). Under this EAP Doctors/Prescribers will be required to complete and submit a request to the government for consideration of coverage for a medication not on the ODB formulary. This may not initially (or ever) be a smooth quick process, so for the first six months it appears that most group benefits carriers/insurers will provide coverage for medications that are not on the formulary but would otherwise be covered under the group plan while the EAP forms are being worked on. Most carriers have suggested they will be sending out communication to group administrators and members to advise of their implementation of this new government program.

In the meantime, we have attached a couple of pieces from OHIP outlining the program so you can be aware of it and answer some introductory questions from employees or even provide it to them.

Lastly there should be some small savings at the group level with some of the medications no longer going thru the benefits plan as most children do not claim much in the way of drugs. We will be monitoring that for you and discuss it at a later date.



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There are two links below that we thought would be of value.

*(Copy and paste the link into your browser and it will bring you straight to Ontario.ca)*

**1. Learn about OHIP+:** <https://www.ontario.ca/page/learn-about-ohip-plus>

**2. Applying to the Exceptional Access Program:** <https://www.ontario.ca/page/applying-exceptional-access-program#section-0>