

Memo #20

Date: January 9, 2018

To: Executive/Members

Re: **OHIP+; Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave; Personal Emergency Leave; Leave for Death of a Child and for Crime-Related Disappearance**

Happy New Year

We hope everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable holiday with family and friends. It is important to recharge our batteries as we roll into the “dog days” of winter.

OHIP +

Starting January 1, 2018, Ontario residents who are 24-years-old or younger will be able to get their prescription medications for free under the new OHIP+ program. Enrolment and drug coverage will be automatic, with no upfront costs such as co-payments or deductibles.

The new program will cover all drugs currently reimbursed through the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program. This includes more than 4,400 drug products listed on the ODB Formulary/Comparative Drug Index and additional drugs eligible for funding through the Exceptional Access Program (EAP) provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Maternity, Parental and Adoption Leave

EI maternity benefits are offered to biological mothers, including surrogate mothers, who cannot work because they are pregnant or have recently given birth. A maximum of **15 weeks** of EI maternity benefits is available. Effective December 3, 2017, the 15 weeks can start as early as 12 weeks before the expected date of birth, and can end as late as 17 weeks after the actual date of birth.

EI parental benefits are offered to parents who are caring for a newborn or newly adopted child or children.

There are two options available for receiving parental benefits: standard or extended.

- **Standard parental benefits** can be paid for a maximum of **35** weeks and must be claimed within a 52-week period (12 months) after the week the child was born or placed for the purpose of adoption. The benefits are available to biological, adoptive, or legally recognized parents at a weekly benefit rate of **55%** of the claimant’s average weekly insurable earnings up to a maximum amount. The two parents can share these 35 weeks of standard parental benefits.
- **Extended parental benefits** can be paid for a maximum of 61 weeks and must be claimed within a 78-week period (18 months) after the week the child was born or placed for the purpose of adoption. The benefits are available to biological, adoptive, or legally recognized parents at a weekly benefit rate of **33%** of the claimant’s average weekly insurable earnings up to a maximum amount. The two parents can share these 61 weeks of extended parental benefits.
 - You can choose to claim extended parental benefits **only** if your child was born or placed with you for the purpose of adoption on or after December 3, 2017.

Paid Emergency Leave

An employee who is entitled to personal emergency leave can take up to 10 days of leave each calendar year due to:

- personal illness, injury or medical emergency
- or**
- death, illness, injury, medical emergency or urgent matter relating to the following family members:
 - spouse (includes both married and unmarried couples, of the same or opposite genders)
 - parent, step-parent, foster parent, child, step-child, foster child, grandparent, step-grandparent, grandchild or step-grandchild of the employee or the employee's spouse
 - spouse of the employee's child
 - brother or sister of the employee
 - relative of the employee who is dependent on the employee for care or assistance

Please note:

- **Personal emergency leave pay is only payable for the first two days of leave taken in a calendar year.**
- If an employment contract, including a collective agreement, provides a greater right or benefit than the personal emergency leave standard under the *Employment Standards Act* (ESA), then the terms of the contract apply instead of the standard.
 - In our case, we have access to two personal days, two serious illness days and one discretionary day (discretion of the Board), and as such our Collective Agreement has greater rights or benefits, but a teacher could access the unpaid portion of the Personal Emergency Leave after the above leave days are exhausted.

Leave for Death of a Child and for Crime-Related Disappearance

Crime-related child death or disappearance leave is an **unpaid job-protected leave of absence**. It provides up to 104 weeks with respect to the crime-related death of a child and up to 52 weeks with respect to the crime-related disappearance of a child.

A leave for the crime-related disappearance of a child must be taken within the 53-week period that begins in the week the child disappeared.

A leave for the crime-related death of a child must be taken within the 105-week period that begins in the week the child died.

In most cases, an employee must take the leave in a single period.

**If you have any concerns, please contact the Unit office at 705-733-9625 or 1-800-558-4815
Thank you for sharing this information with OECTA members.**