



# AUTOMOTIVE RETAILERS ASSOCIATION

## Group Benefits

JANUARY 2020

**HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR**

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To protect you

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## Billing Cutoff February

**Please ensure any changes in staffing, coverage, etc... are submitted prior to January 27, 2020.**

All changes need to be in place in order to make the billing cycle. Updates filed after the 27<sup>th</sup> will show on the following month's billing.

## Red Tape?

The processes, forms, and procedures for administering a group benefits plan can seem like a bureaucratic minefield. The perception can be that things are designed to prevent the easy running of a plan for your employees. In reality the processes are there to protect both the employer and employee. There are many laws in place that must be met and the ARA's processes are designed to help meet the requirements and mitigate any possible legal issues.

A simple example is the addition of new employees. If the plan is set to have a 90-day waiting period a new employee must be added within that time frame. Failure to do so could result in the employee having cause for legal action. The employee would have to submit a health questionnaire, have restricted coverage, and possibly be denied coverage. All this sounds like red tape, but it is not. It protects the employee, the employer and everyone else already on the plan.

If your chosen plan design has a waiting period there is a legal requirement that everyone eligible in that period must be put on the plan (there are some exceptions). It is not a choice of the employee or the employer. It is a legal issue. An employer could face legal action should they fail to properly administer their plan.

Waiting periods are only one example. There are many more critical concerns to properly manage a benefit plan. That is why you have an expert administration team at the ARA working for you.



## 2019 Claim Submission Deadline Will Soon Be Here

The deadline for any unpaid 2019 Dental and Extended Health Claims is February 28, 2019. There will be an increasing volume of claims to process as the deadline approaches, so claim payments may take longer than the average 2-4 weeks. It is in your favour to send your claims in sooner rather than later.

The fastest way to process claims is by using online services. You can register online and include your banking information. Payments for eligible paramedical and prescriptions are directly deposited to your bank account, usually in under 48 hours.

To get an access ID and password for online services...

Go to [www.ara.bc.ca](http://www.ara.bc.ca) and follow the links to Group Benefits and Online Services. Once there, select the Register button under the Sign In section.

Still prefer snail mail...

Visit our web site at [www.ara.bc.ca](http://www.ara.bc.ca) and click on Group Plan Forms to find all the up-to-date forms. We recommend you download and print forms as needed. This way, you know you always have the current version.



## Increase in 2020 EI Maximum insurable earnings

The federal government announced the 2020 EI rates and maximums.

Maximum insurance earnings \$54,200 Maximum EI benefit \$573.

This increase affects STD plans where: the maximum benefit reflects the EI maximum weekly benefit (\$573 for 2020). The EI maximum earnings amount depends on the STD benefit amount.

This increase affects Short-Term Disability plans where:

- Maximum STD Benefit is based on the EI maximum weekly benefit (\$573 for 2020)
- The EI maximum earnings amount is used to calculate the STD Benefit

We have updated our systems so that the STD claim payments reflect the increase in EI maximum. If your contract is based on current allowable EI insurable earnings it does not need a contract amendment. These updates are effective January 1, 2020 and are reflected in your January Billing.

For further information regarding the EI premium reduction, please don't hesitate to contact your ARA Group Plan Team.



## We Work For You

ARA plan administrators work for you and are here to help.

Monday to Friday 8:30 – 4:30 pm 604 419 3629