

UNDERSTANDING my coverage

November 22, 2012

Update on massage therapy claims in Alberta

Last year, Sun Life provided you with information and guidelines about eligible claims for massage therapy in the province of Alberta. The July 2011 [communication](#) addressed the approval standards for massage therapists and provided you with the associations and practitioners in Alberta that are eligible to provide you with services under the terms of your benefits plan.

In Alberta, because massage therapy is not regulated by provincial legislation, independent associations were created to represent these practitioners and to self-regulate the profession. For massage therapy, Sun Life Financial requires that all massage therapists have at least 2,200 hours of formal education and training in their profession.

We are contacting you with another update so you will know how massage therapists are approved as eligible paramedical practitioners.

A massage therapy update

This update is particular to massage therapists who belong to the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada (the NHPC). Since not all NHPC massage therapists have the required minimum of 2,200 hours of formal education, the NHPC has developed a Competency Equivalency. This exam is now offered to NHPC massage therapists with less than 2,200 hours of formal education so they can upgrade their credentials.

The NHPC also recognizes long-practicing massage therapists or those who have achieved the educational equivalency over a period of time. These practitioners will be grandfathered due to their long-time experience, so they will not have to take the Competency Equivalency Exam. Sun Life continues to work with NHPC to finalize the grandfathering details.

What is changing?

As of May 1, 2013, Sun Life will only recognize NHPC massage therapy members who:

- are in good standing with the NHPC;
- have at least 2,200 hours of formal training; or
- have successfully completed the Competency Equivalent Exam.

How the change affects you

Up to and including April 30, 2013, will consider massage therapy claims as eligible for reimbursement under your plan as noted in the above linked communication.

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As of May 1, 2013, Alberta massage therapists who belong to the NHPC will be considered as eligible paramedical providers as set out in the bullet points above.

Not all NHPC massage therapists will have one of the qualifications, described above. If your massage therapist is a member of the NHPC, it is recommended that you ask about his or her qualifications.

If you have a massage therapist who belongs to another association in Alberta recognized by Sun Life (please refer to the 2011 communication), you are not affected by this change.

Questions?

If you have any questions about which massage therapy associations Sun Life Financial recognizes across Canada, please contact our Customer Care Centre toll-free at 1-800-361-6212 (Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST).