

UNDERSTANDING my coverage

June 21, 2012

Non-therapeutic massage clinics in Quebec

There is a growing issue concerning non-therapeutic massage clinics in Quebec issuing receipts for insurance purposes – and plan members claiming these as therapeutic massage services under their group benefits plan.

This communication provides an overview of the issue – and a reminder that only claims for therapeutic massages services are covered under your plan.

The background

Massage therapy is an unregulated profession in Quebec, meaning there are no government-regulated, province-wide standards of practice or quality controls.

Over the past several years, there have been a growing number of massage establishments in Quebec that operate as massage parlours – offering sexual services in lieu of or together with a body rub or massage.

These operations are most easily identified by the public advertising they post – offering “additional” or “other” services and using sexually suggestive photos or language. They can also be identified by their long hours of operation, with many open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The concern: receipts are being issued

A number of these operations advertise that they will issue receipts for insurance purposes – even though the services are clearly not eligible for coverage. Under the terms of our plans, coverage is available only for therapeutic or medically necessary services as accepted by standard medical practices.

As a result, we will decline all massage therapy claims – even if a receipt has been provided – if the service has been provided to a plan member in an establishment that we have determined is not in fact a true massage therapy clinic, either through its advertising, hours of operation or other evidence.

Do your research before being treated

To avoid having a legitimate massage claim denied, we encourage you to research any massage provider you are considering to ensure it is a legitimate provider of therapeutic massage services. Any clinic that offers “additional” services or is a 24/7 operation will likely not meet the criteria as a quality provider.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact the Customer Care Centre at 1-800-361-6212.