

## Innovative pilot project to test virtual cognitive behavioural therapy delivery

Sun Life Financial is teaming up with University of Regina in a pilot project that may lead to faster, easier access to cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for plan members.

The pilot project will give plan members with mild to moderate anxiety or depression (and who are on long-term disability claim with Sun Life Financial) the option of completing an online CBT program with self-paced modules. The online component will be supported by weekly connections with a therapist.

Virtual CBT has been found to have similar results to traditional in-person care, while overcoming obstacles like lack of resources, geographic challenges, limited mobility and time restrictions.

### Why test virtual CBT?

“In an era where mental health claims represent a significant portion of disability, it’s more important than ever to explore additional ways of delivering effective therapy faster to plan members,” says Dr. Marie-Hélène Pelletier AVP of Workplace Mental Health at Sun Life. “We are excited to pilot this approach and measure the impact of facilitating this type of access to more plan members.”

With the changing workforce, virtual CBT may even become the preferred method of treatment. It may also be an innovative tool to deliver treatment while containing rising plan costs.

### About the pilot project

Selected plan members in Ontario and Saskatchewan will be offered the opportunity to participate. It is entirely voluntary and accepting or declining to participate will not affect a member’s claims status.

The pilot project is part of ongoing research at University of Regina and is based on validated methods for providing care. As part of its research, the University provides online and virtual therapeutic care and follows up through a comprehensive program.

The pilot project will run from June 2017 to June 2018.

### Questions?

Please contact your Sun Life Financial group benefits representative.

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