

# THE GROUP SCOOP



## CURRY GROUP BENEFIT SOLUTIONS

OCT 2025

### UNDERSTANDING PRESCRIPTION COSTS & ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

#### FOR THE PLAN MEMBER

When it comes to managing the cost of prescription drugs, it helps to understand how your benefits plan works, the difference between brand-name and generic medications, and what patient assistance programs like RxHelp and InnoviCares can do for you.

#### Brand-Name vs. Generic Medications

When a new drug is developed, it's sold under a brand name and protected by a patent for a number of years. Once the patent expires, other manufacturers can produce a generic version of that same drug.

#### What's the difference?

- **Active Ingredient:** Generics contain the same active ingredient as the brand-name drug.
- **Dosage, Strength, and Form:** They must have the same dosage, strength, and form (e.g. tablet, capsule).
- **Effectiveness:** Generics are required by Health Canada to work the same way in the body as the brand-name version.
- **Appearance:** They may look different (colour, shape), but they're clinically equivalent.

#### Why are generics cheaper?

- Generic manufacturers don't have to repeat the costly research and development phase. As a result, generics are typically 15–25% less expensive than brand-name drugs.

#### Why Your Benefits Plan Uses "Mandatory Generic Substitution"

Most group benefit plans today automatically cover the generic version of a medication when one is available. This is called mandatory generic. Why?

- It helps keep premiums and plan costs lower for both employers and employees.
- It allows benefit plans to cover more people and more services overall.
- If you or your doctor prefer a brand-name drug, your plan may still cover it if a medical reason is provided (some conditions apply).

#### Patient Assistance Programs: RxHelp & InnoviCares

Even with generic options, some prescriptions remain costly—especially for brand-name medications not fully covered by your plan. That's where patient assistance programs can help.

#### RxHelp

- Offers individual savings cards for specific brand-name drugs.
- Works like a secondary payer at the pharmacy—after your plan pays, RxHelp covers part or all of the remainder.
- Free to join; sign up online or through your doctor.



#### Did you know?

**Overage Dependents:** When your child turns 21, they may no longer be automatically eligible under your benefits plan. If they are attending post-secondary school full-time, you need to notify your insurance company to keep them covered. If you are travelling make sure your dependents are covered.

#### InnoviCares

- One universal savings card for many brand-name medications.
- Works with your benefits plan or provincial coverage.
- Free and available to all Canadians.

#### Why these programs exist:

Brand-name manufacturers would rather offer a discount and make a sale than lose it entirely to a generic. These programs help bridge the gap so patients can access brand-name drugs at a lower cost.

RxHelp & InnoviCares both cover different medications. Refer to their website to see which medications are covered.

#### Where to find more information

##### RxHelp:

[www.rxhelp.ca](http://www.rxhelp.ca)  
1-866-RxHelp4

##### InnoviCares:

[www.innovicare.ca](http://www.innovicare.ca)  
1-877-790-1991

## PLAN ADMINISTRATOR CORNER: RUNNING AN EFFICIENT GROUP BENEFITS PLAN

As part of our ongoing plan reviews, we've been asking each of our clients about how their benefit premiums are split between the employer and employees.

### Here's what we've found:

- Most of our groups have employees pay for the pooled benefits — such as Long-Term Disability (LTD), Life Insurance, AD&D, Dependent Life, and Critical Illness.
- This structure is common because it simplifies tax reporting and improves tax efficiency.

### Here's why:

- LTD: If employees pay the premium, any benefit received at claim time is tax-free.
- Life, AD&D, Dependent Life, and Critical Illness: These benefits are always tax-free at claim, but if the employer pays the premiums, the value must be reported on the employee's T4 as a taxable benefit.

By having employees pay for these pooled benefits, you eliminate the need for payroll reporting and

avoid additional taxable income for employees.

Meanwhile, the employer typically pays for Extended Health Care and Dental coverage. These are among the few benefits an employer can provide that are completely tax-free to the employee when employer-paid.

### 💡 Why this matters:

There are very few things an employer can offer that are truly tax-free — health and dental coverage, and a Health Spending Account (HSA) are key examples. By structuring your plan this way, both the employer and employees reduce payroll-related costs such as EI, CPP, and income tax deductions — eliminating unnecessary “shrinkage” and improving overall efficiency.

### 👛 Business Owners: Use Pre-Tax Dollars for Healthcare Expenses

One of the biggest inefficiencies we see in group benefits plans is when business owners pay for healthcare expenses personally using after-tax dollars.

This approach ensures that every healthcare dollar is spent more

efficiently, reducing personal tax exposure and keeping funds inside the business where they're more valuable.

A Business Owner Plan can take this even further by:

- Removing caps on eligible healthcare expenses
- Covering a broad range of CRA-approved medical and dental expenses
- Providing flexible reimbursement for services not covered under the traditional group plan

### 📌 Managing High-Cost Drugs with Smart Formularies

Prescription drug costs are rising, and a small number of high-cost medications can drive significant spending.

Modern drug formularies are designed to help manage these expenses effectively:

- Redirect high-dollar specialty drugs to provincial programs (like Trillium in Ontario)
- Utilize manufacturer assistance programs where available
- Maintain access to necessary medications while stabilizing premiums



## Google Review - Share Your Experience & Win a \$250 Amazon Gift Card!

If you've had a great experience with Curry Group Benefit Solutions, we'd be so grateful if you shared it! **Google reviews mean the world to us.** They help others discover who we are, what we do, and why working with us makes a difference. Your kind words help build trust and allow others to hear real stories from clients like you.

**Have a minute?** Scan the QR code below and let us know how we're doing—we'd love to hear your thoughts!

**Leave your review by October 31<sup>st</sup> and we will enter you into a draw to win a \$250 Amazon Gift Card!**

**The Draw the winner on Monday November 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

### ➡ How to leave a review:

1. Open your phone's camera and scan the QR code.
2. Click the link that pops up.
3. Rate us and leave a short message—it's quick and easy!

Thank you for your continued support!  
— The Curry Group Benefit Solutions Team



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