

Private health benefit coverage explained

Medical cannabis has been legal in Canada since 2001 and, given its therapeutic use, many employers and group benefit providers are evaluating the expansion of benefit coverage to include it for plan members.

Private insurance coverage of medical cannabis in Canada

Medical cannabis does not have a drug identification number (DIN) and, because of this, third-party health insurers have not covered it in the same way as typical prescription medicines.

With increased acceptance among healthcare professionals, some private insurance companies have decided to reimburse the expense of medical cannabis.

Review your benefit guide to see if you have coverage for medical cannabis with your benefit provider. If you do not have coverage, you might want to communicate your need for medical coverage to your employer or human resources to encourage them to add this to your group plan. There are a few options that may be available to you already:

HEALTHCARE SPENDING ACCOUNTS

Many benefit plans offer HSAs that allow plan members to submit for coverage of their medical cannabis with appropriate documentation.

EXTENDED HEALTH BENEFIT PROVISION

Contact your group benefit customer service line to find out if your plan already has a provision or allowance for coverage of medical cannabis within extended health benefits. You may be covered up to a certain dollar amount per year and/or for certain medical uses.

COST PLUS

Cost Plus is a feature that allows for the payment of legitimate expenses that exceed your policy limits if your employer approves. Cost Plus procedures vary by plan. Ask your employer or HR if medical cannabis is covered under Cost Plus.

Income tax credits

Claiming medical cannabis on your income tax return

Medical cannabis products, including some vapourizers, are eligible medical expenses when authorized by a qualified healthcare professional and purchased from a legal source (licensed producers), according to the Canada Revenue Agency.

You should consult a professional who can help calculate your eligible medical expenses and claim them on your tax return. If you're using tax software, you will be able to enter medical expenses in a deductions section.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU CLAIM ON YOUR INCOME TAX RETURN?

Calculate your total spend for the year on medical cannabis (dried flower, oil, softgels, medical devices, and seeds)

1. Sign in to your account at SpectrumCannabis.com
2. Scroll to Order History to access a list of all your orders
3. Download receipts of all purchases from the year
4. Tally the total of all your purchases
5. Add this to your medical expenses on your T1 tax form



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