

THE INSIDE STORY[®]

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**Here's how to make sure your plan members
put their best foot forward this summer...**

*Proper footwear 'off the job' means
more employees 'on the job'*

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Finally, summer's here—our chance to take a break—and our chance to be as they say, just a bit more "footloose and fancy-free." Seems like a good idea, right? Turns out that although during the summer we are more apt to go barefoot, as well as wear flimsy shoes like flip flops and other poorly fitting sandals that feel good, this may actually be doing more harm than good. Inadequate support of the arches in our feet can lead to problems—long lasting problems that linger months after the last summer sunset.

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Plantar Fasci-what?



Although a mouthful, Plantar Fasciitis or let's say, PF, is all about the foot. PF is painful inflammation in the Plantar Fascia, the thick connective tissue in the sole of the foot that extends from the heel to the ball of the foot supporting the arch. When we go barefoot or wear flimsy shoes, we don't provide our feet with enough arch support. As a result, the Plantar Fascia stretches too far and tears, resulting in inflammation.



When your feet hurt, you hurt *all over*

If you have PF, you will likely feel pain on the bottom of your foot where the Plantar Fascia attaches to the heel. Although symptoms range from mild to severe and may linger for months or flare up unexpectedly, pain is typically most severe in the morning. This is the case because while at rest, the Plantar Fascia is in a shortened position. When you get out of bed, the sudden stretch and load of your body weight creates a pull.

Without proper treatment, PF can lead to foot, knee, hip or back problems because of the way PF changes the motion of walking. In addition, ignoring

Preventing PF: If the shoe fits, buy it...

Although PF can also be due to a sports injury or weight gain, inadequate arch support is usually still the culprit responsible for PF, not to mention a whole range of other foot issues. Help plan members keep their feet healthy this summer by sharing the following footwear tips:

- Don't go barefoot – whether indoors or outdoors, always wear shoes that have arch support, cushioning, and treads.
- Don't wear poorly fitting footwear – assess all of your shoes to make sure they have proper arch support, cushioning, and trends.

If you don't have proper footwear, time to go shopping...

- *Size:* measure both feet late in the day because feet tend to swell and choose shoes that are ½ inch longer than your longest toe.



PF often leads to avoiding activities like exercise because of the pain. Limiting positive behaviours like being active can trigger a negative spiral leading to other issues related to a sedentary lifestyle.



■ *Design:* closed toes and backs are ideal because while providing support they also protect from injury. The shoe heel should be as wide as your foot and maximum of 1.5 inches high with soles and treads that provide grip.

■ *Material:* leather and canvas are ideal because they allow your feet to breathe and are flexible, bending along with your feet.

Source: Public Health Agency of Canada



If PF, then RS— Reduce Strain that is...

If you or a plan member suspects that PF has set in, early management is critical to avoid it from becoming chronic and possibly not resolving for years. For instance, the Canadian Physiotherapy Association recommends the following:

- "Icing will help decrease the inflammation and pain. Put your foot on a frozen bottle of water or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a tea-towel, 3 or 4 times a day for 5–10 minutes each time. Never ice more than once an hour to prevent risk of ice burn to desensitized tissue.
- Stretches for the fascia, calf and hamstring muscles plus specific strengthening of foot and leg muscles will help to reduce symptoms, correct the problem and avoid re-injury.
- Establish an accurate activity history and implement modified active rest with non-weight bearing activities

such as swimming, cycling or running in water.

- A foam ring support or heel cup in your shoe will help to alleviate pressure from the painful area. These can be home-made or purchased from a drug store.
- Taping the foot by a physiotherapist will reduce stress on the plantar fascia and improve foot biomechanics.
- A physiotherapist can advise you on the benefit of motion control shoes or orthotics."

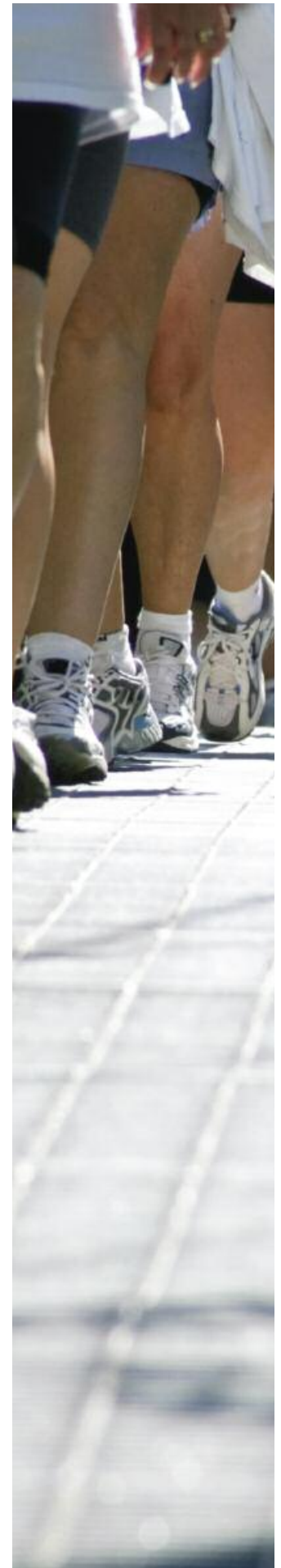
Advise plan members to visit their family physician who may in turn refer them to another health care professional. Ideally early management resolves PF; if not, a combination of treatment options may be appropriate, from physiotherapy to orthotics to surgery (in rare or extreme cases).

Don't be a victim of fashion...

The price tag of poorly fitting footwear is just too high

Foot, knee, hip, back problems—and that's just the beginning. Not exactly the typical "to die for list" when shoe shopping, but precisely what we should keep in mind as a sober reminder of the evils lurking in those "oh so cute

summery flip flops." The message to plan members is "Buyer Beware" because years of possible foot problems due to poorly fitting footwear is no bargain.





WHAT'S NEW

Pharmacists in the news again...

Expanded role for pharmacists in Newfoundland and Labrador

Now pharmacists in Newfoundland and Labrador are allowed to refill, extend, or adjust prescriptions due to recent changes to the pharmacy regulations and new standards of pharmacy practice adopted by the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board. With patient consent, the changes allow pharmacists to refill or modify a prescription. For example, now a pharmacist in Newfoundland and Labrador can:

- Change a prescription drug from a tablet to a liquid to make it easier for a patient to swallow
- Provide an emergency supply of medication
- Extend expired prescriptions for limited periods
- Make minor changes to prescriptions to avoid dispensing delays

When extending a prescription or making a change to a prescription, the pharmacist must notify the original prescriber. In addition, although the standards are now in effect, before providing these services, pharmacists are required to fully educate themselves on the standards and submit a declaration form to the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board.

What about the rest of Canada?

As reported in the December 2009 *Inside Story*®, similar to Newfoundland and Labrador, the scope of practice is evolving across Canada with prescription adaptation authority granted to pharmacists to varying degrees in British Columbia, Alberta, Northwest Territories, Quebec,



New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Legislation continues to be under review in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Prince Edward Island, and nothing has been announced to date in Yukon and Nunavut. A detailed summary of pharmacist prescribing authority status across Canada is available from the Canadian Pharmacists Association website at [http://www.pharmacists.ca/content/about_cpha/who_we_are/policy_position/pdf/](http://www.pharmacists.ca/content/about_cpha/who_we_are/policy_position/pdf/Pharmacists_PrescribingInCanada.pdf)

[Pharmacists PrescribingInCanada.pdf](http://www.pharmacists.ca/content/about_cpha/who_we_are/policy_position/pdf/Pharmacists_PrescribingInCanada.pdf)

What does this mean for you?

The simple answer is "No impact"...

These changes do not affect your Green Shield Canada drug plan because regardless of whether prescription adaptation authority has been granted to pharmacists, we pay the drug claim as long as it is eligible under your plan.

What does this mean for your plan members?

With less delays in renewing prescriptions, plan members should enjoy quicker, more convenient service. As Jerome Kennedy, Newfoundland and Labrador Minister of Health and Community Services says, "These new regulations will allow the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to get the medicines they need from participating pharmacies even if they can't get to their doctor right away."

Whether good times or bad, it's always the right time for cost savings

In our minds, getting the most out of your benefit plan should be a continuous process. As we've suggested in previous issues of *The Inside Story*®, a great way to maximize the value of your plan is through plan member education by raising awareness of the important role plan members play as savvy health benefit consumers. Another effective way to leverage benefit plan dollars is to take advantage of opportunities in the public health care system.

An Ontario Example: Limiting private plan reimbursement of limited use drugs

'Limited use' drugs are drugs that the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program identifies as having therapeutic value in specific circumstances, but not being appropriate for general listing in the Formulary. Limited use products are listed in the Formulary with specific clinical criteria/conditions for use. These products are reimbursed under the ODB program only when prescribed for an ODB-eligible recipient in accordance with the applicable criteria, after the

prescriber has written the Reason for Use Code on the prescription.

Although limited use drug claims should first go to ODB for reimbursement and then to the private plan, often the claims are sent directly to the private plan for reimbursement. Accordingly, to ensure cost savings, it is important to have a system in place to ensure that ODB automatically becomes the first payer when appropriate.

Using technology, we are able to leverage our plan sponsors' benefit plan dollars by ensuring that if the plan member qualifies, then ODB automatically becomes the first payer. The bottom line is plan sponsors' enhanced bottom line: automation translates into significant savings for our plan sponsors.

Have your cake and eat it too...

Keeping a close eye on the public health care system and introducing innovative technology allows plan sponsors to offer a top quality benefits program while reducing exposure to higher than necessary claim costs.



e-service at your...service

Are your phones ringing off the hook with plan members asking everything from how much was deposited in their HCSA to how much their legal benefit covers for real estate transactions? Now you can relish the sound of silence...

Encourage plan members to register for Plan Member Online Services to view their entire benefit booklet and check eligibility including limitations and exclusions—right down to the details of each benefit. It's fast—and with just two steps, it's also easy:

1. Sign in to Plan Member Online Services
2. Click "View Benefit Booklet"

While online, Plan members can also submit a "pretend" claim to instantly find out when and what portion of a claim will be covered.

And, once a claim has been submitted, plan members can also choose to be notified by email as soon as their claim statement is posted online – telling them that their claim has been processed and any applicable payment has been deposited into their bank account. All the answers are right there at their fingertips.

With Plan Member Online Services, not only will your phones no longer be ringing off the hook, you may start wondering if they are out of service.



NEWS & EVENTS

Green Shield Canada continues to lead the way with new leadership—from familiar faces

Building on an exciting start to 2010 of leadership news, we're on a roll as we kick off the second half of 2010 with even more leadership developments. Steve Bradie, President and Chief Executive Officer, is pleased to appoint Wendy Murkar to the position of Vice

President, Pharmacy Services and Strategic Initiatives, Rick Thrasher to the position of Vice President, Claims and Customer Service, and Sal Cimino to the position of Director, Pharmacy Services.

Familiar Faces, Extraordinary Leadership



Wendy Murkar, Vice President,
Pharmacy Services and Strategic
Initiatives



Rick Thrasher, Vice President,
Claims and Customer Service



Sal Cimino, Director,
Pharmacy Services

Winner of the draw for a 'night out on the town'



Congratulations to **Steven Seguin**, of London, ON, the winner of Green Shield Canada's monthly draw for gift certificates for a 'night out on the town'. Through this contest, one name will be drawn each month from plan members who have registered for Plan Member Online Services for that month. To learn more, visit greenshield.ca.

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