

# Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology

## **GROUP INSURANCE BENEFITS COMMUNIQUÉ**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

#### **ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT BIOLOGIC TRANSITION FOR ACTIVE EMPLOYEES AGE 65 AND OLDER**

The Ontario Drug Benefit Plan (ODB), which applies to Ontarians age 65 and over, will no longer cover eight biologic drugs effective December 29<sup>th</sup> 2023. However, the biosimilar versions of those medications will be covered under the ODB.

ODB is first payor for all medications for any plan member or dependent that is ODB eligible under the Extended Health Care Plan.

In keeping with this, and to ensure transition time for individuals who may be claiming these drugs, the following steps will be taken under Sun Life's provincial ODB integration program **effective February 1st, 2024:**

- All current ODB eligible plan members and dependents will have 6 months from February 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 to transition from a named biologic to the biosimilar and commence reimbursement for the biosimilar through the ODB.
- There are mechanisms under both the ODB and the Sun Life program for approval of exceptions\*.
- In addition, all new ODB-eligible plan members and dependents will be required at 65 to transition to an eligible biosimilar under the ODB and must, within 6 months of their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, be fully transitioned to the biosimilar with reimbursement through the ODB plan.

What this means for you, the plan member, and your dependents:

- Sun Life will contact plan members in January 2024 who are using an impacted originator biologic drug with further details about this transition.
- Transitioning from an originator biologic to a biosimilar may help to lower your drug costs.
- You will need to check in with your doctor as they can:
  - tell you more about the biosimilar option,
  - help you to decide whether transitioning to the biosimilar option would be clinically effective and safe, and
  - provide you with a new prescription if you transition.

#### **What if you decide not to transition?**

You can choose to stay on an originator biologic drug, but you may have high out-of-pocket costs. If you wish to continue the originator biologic treatment, your health-care provider may be able to help you to find other sources of funding. This may include manufacturer patient support programs.

#### **\*Medical exceptions:**

An exception may be made if you have a medical reason that does not allow you to take a biosimilar. If so, your doctor needs to let Sun Life know. You can call Sun Life at 1-800-361-6212 if you need to obtain a drug exception form. If you apply for an exception and it is approved, no changes will be made to your coverage. You will still be able to take the originator biologic drug. However, you might need to apply to the province's program as well.