

Employees and/or their dependents who have recently arrived in Canada may face a waiting period before qualifying for provincial or territorial health insurance (e.g., OHIP, RAMQ). It may also take several months after their application for the coverage to become active.

However, to be eligible for most group benefits programs, insurance carriers typically require that provincial coverage (or an equivalent) is already in place.

To address this issue, many insurance companies offer a plan equivalent to provincial health coverage, referred to as Provincial Plan Replacement or PPR. These programs ensure your employees new to Canada are protected from unforeseen medical expenses while waiting for provincial coverage to take effect, and allows them to participate in the benefits program. Here's what you need to know:

Provincial Plan Replacement Coverage

PPR plans are typically short-term, covering the period before public health coverage starts (usually up to 3 months, but this varies). They typically include primary health care (such as the services of physicians and other health professionals) and care in hospitals. The provinces and territories may also provide some supplementary health coverage such as prescription drugs. The level and scope of coverage for supplementary benefits varies between jurisdictions.

Cost and Limitations

Premiums vary based on factors such as province/territory of residence and single or family coverage.

Pre-existing conditions may not be covered or may have a waiting period and some plans may limit or exclude certain services, such as maternity care. It is important to review the PPR contract to verify the specific terms of coverage.

The employee should advise their employer once public health coverage becomes active, so they can transition from the PPR to the group benefits program. Coordinating this transition is essential to avoid gaps in coverage. Additionally, the insurance provider must be notified when the provincial plan replacement coverage is no longer needed.

** This is not a legal document, and is intended solely for informational purposes.*