



NHRIPP

NURSING HOMES AND RELATED INDUSTRIES PENSION PLAN

Caring for your Retirement

FEBRUARY 2021

NHRIPP NOW



COVID-19 UPDATE

Your Plan administrator, InBenefits, continues to provide services to members during the pandemic, including starting new pensions, making benefit payments, receiving and processing employer and employee contributions and answering your questions. InBenefits did experience some delays in the early days of the pandemic as most staff shifted to working from home but the temporary backlog of files has now been eliminated.

Page 3 of this newsletter has some information about making self payments during periods in which you cannot work due to the pandemic. Members can also send an email to information@nhripp.ca or call 905-889-6200 or 1-800-287-4816 toll-free for information.

We thank you for your patience and understanding during these challenging times

Be safe. Together we will get through this!

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A compilation of some of the most common questions received during the past few months.

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Exciting new tools for members and employers are ready to launch.

GETTING THROUGH THESE CHALLENGING TIMES

A year has passed since the global pandemic reached Canada. Since then it has touched us all. We know that many Plan members are going through stressful and uncertain times but also know that together we will get through this. We want to recognize the many Plan members who are providing essential services to their communities during this pandemic and thank them for all the good work they have done and continue to do every day.

In addition to its personal toll, COVID-19 has impacted all aspects of the Canadian economy. The volatility of the financial markets continues and is expected to continue for some time. The Board of Trustees continues to focus on managing the Plan and its investments for the long-term and regularly assesses the Plan and its financial health.

A key component of managing the Plan is having actuarial valuations regularly performed. These valuations compare the money coming into the Plan, as contributions and investment income, to the cost of the pension benefits the Plan will pay in the future. The NHRIPP's last valuation was at January 1, 2020 and showed that the Plan was fully funded on a going concern basis. Going concern funding assumes the Plan will continue indefinitely and uses assumptions about future interest rates and investment returns to determine whether a pension plan is sustainable over the long term. Like most multi-employer plans, the Plan is funded only on a going concern basis. Solvency funding assumes a pension plan is terminated on a specific date and all benefits are paid out immediately using the interest rates in effect on the date of termination. In response to the pandemic, governments slashed interest rates which increased the cost of paying pensions. The Plan is now about 52% funded on a solvency basis.

The Plan has experienced steady growth and now has more than 50,000 active members and more than \$2 billion in assets. The Plan's growth has benefited all members as pension experts agree that for pension plans - bigger is better. The Plan's growth has permitted the Trustees to diversify the types of investments the Plan holds. It now has significant allocations to less volatile asset classes including infrastructure, private debt and global real estate which are not readily available to smaller pension plans. These asset classes are expected to protect the Plan from corrections in the public markets such as the stock market sell off earlier this year due to the pandemic. The Trustees remain optimistic that their long-term focus on the Plan's sustainability and maintaining its strong fundamentals will get the Plan through these challenging times.

MAKE SURE YOUR DEATH BENEFITS ARE PAID IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR WISHES

No matter what stage of life you're at, it's important to provide the names of your designated beneficiaries to InBenefits. Doing so helps ensure that your loved ones receive any death benefits which may become owing to them as quickly as possible.

If you do not have an eligible spouse, as defined by the applicable pension legislation, and have not designated a beneficiary, any death benefits owing by the Plan will be paid to your estate. Doing so may delay your survivors' receipt of the death benefit. It's important to remember that estate proceeds are paid from the residual assets remaining in the estate after all creditors have been paid.

The good news is that designating your beneficiary or updating that designation can now be done online through the My InSite member portal. **It's quick and it's easy.** Simply click on the Member Sign In button on the home page of www.nhrripp.ca and sign up as a new user or login as an existing user. Then go to the My Beneficiaries page in the portal and follow the instructions.

You can also call the InBenefits Call Centre and have them walk you through the process on the portal or to request that a Designation of Beneficiary Form be mailed or e-mailed to you.

It's important that any death benefits are paid in accordance with your wishes.



RECENT PLAN CHANGES

Changes to the Commuted Value Calculation

A commuted value is the present-day value of a pension calculated in accordance with applicable pension law. As stated in the notice to the members who could have been impacted by this change, former members entitled to a pension of less than \$100 a month at age 65 will receive the solvency funded portion of their commuted values. This is the same proportion that former members entitled to a larger pension receive if they transfer their pension benefits out of the Plan.

Short-Term Employers

The Short-Term Employer ("STE") rules were changed. If multiple affiliated contributing employers, or a union representing members at multiple contributing employers, elect to terminate the participation of members employed at multiple contributing employers, the benefits of the affected members will now be treated as individual terminations.

Please contact InBenefits for more information on any of the above topics.

THE NHRIPP IS A SOMEPP

A Specified Ontario Multi-Employer Pension Plan (a "SOMEPP") is a special class of pension plans which have 15 or more contributing employers and are thus much less likely to terminate. The NHRIPP is a SOMEPP and currently has hundreds of contributing employers.

As a SOMEPP, the Plan is funded only on a going concern basis and is exempted from the solvency funding requirements of Ontario's *Pension Benefits Act*. The Plan's solvency-funded level does have an impact if a former member transfers his or her pension benefits out of the Plan.

For more information on the Plan's SOMEPP designation, please refer to the SOMEPP Notice in the "About the Plan" section in the Plan's website www.nhrripp.ca.

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Andrea Kay – ONA
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YOU ASKED, WE ANSWERED . . .

Here are a few of the most common questions received during the past few months along with our answers.

Maintaining your contributions

Q: What are “self-payments”?

A: Self-payments are pension contributions you may make voluntarily to keep your pension growing if:

- you are on layoff or an approved leave of absence (such as sick leave, maternity or parental leave, workers’ compensation leave, layoff with recall rights, etc.); or
- you stop working for a contributing employer and become employed by another contributing employer before having a break in service because your new employer has not yet started making contributions for you.

To make self-payments, InBenefits must be advised by you or your employer that you are on an approved leave of absence or be advised by your new employer of your hiring. InBenefits will contact you to confirm whether you will be making self-payments.

Q: I can’t attend work because I have to look after my kids who cannot attend school due to the pandemic. What will this mean to my NHRIPP pension?

A: Your NHRIPP pension is based on the employer and employee contributions received on your behalf. If no such contributions are received, your pension will not grow during an absence from work. In response to the pandemic, the Ontario government introduced a new job-protected, emergency leave for employees who are unable to work for reasons related to COVID-19. Ontario employees are eligible for this unpaid leave if they are:

- under individual medical investigation, supervision or treatment for reasons related to COVID-19;
- acting in accordance with an order under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*;
- directed by their employer not to attend work due to the employer’s concern that they may expose others in the workplace to COVID-19;
- providing care or support to family members for a matter related to COVID-19, including a school closure;
- directly affected by travel restrictions and cannot reasonably be expected to travel back to Ontario; or
- in quarantine or self-isolation as a result of information or directions issued by a public health official, a qualified health practitioner, Telehealth Ontario, the province, the federal government, a municipal council, or a board of health.

Under the *Employment Standards Act*, your employer must continue to contribute to the NHRIPP on your behalf during a COVID-19 leave, unless you provide it with written notice that you do not intend to make your employee contributions for the period of your leave. The Trustees will permit members to make self-payments of employee contributions for a COVID-19 leave to at least June 30, 2021. This date will be reassessed at a future time.

Terminating from employment

Q: What is a Break in Service (“BIS”)?

A: Under the Plan rules, you will normally have a Break in Service and become a former member if no contributions are received on your behalf for eight months. This eight-month period provides members an opportunity to find employment with another contributing employer so they can keep accruing an NHRIPP pension. The eight-month period does not include periods during which you are away from work due to illness or disability but still on a contributing employer’s payroll; on an approved leave of absence; or on layoff and subject to recall under your collective agreement.

For a more detailed article on your options at termination, you should refer to page 2 of the May 2019 edition of NHRIPP Now, which is available on the NHRIPP website.

Ready to retire

Q: How do I apply for my pension?

A: If you are considering retirement, you can call InBenefits to request an estimate of your monthly pension at the date you want your pension to start to be paid. You should call InBenefits three months before the date you want your pension to begin to request a pension application and the other forms you will need to complete to start your pension. InBenefits must also receive confirmation of your last day worked from your employer before it can start your pension.

Members can now do a pension estimate and request a pension application using the *My InSite* portal. However, you should not make any final decision about your retirement until you receive an official pension application from InBenefits. Refer to the *My InSite* Useful Information and Getting Started Guide which will be provided to you when InBenefits lets you know you can access the portal.

For a more information on this topic, you should refer to the “You asked, We answered” section on page 2 of the October 2018 edition of NHRIPP Now, which is available on the NHRIPP website.



EXCITING NEW TOOLS FOR MEMBERS AND EMPLOYERS!

In recent editions of NHRIPP Now we have told you about our initiatives to improve the member and employer experience. We are pleased to say that we are ready to launch some exciting new tools on the NHRIPP website which will benefit members and employers alike.

It all starts with a newly designed Plan website. We would show you more than the header, but we really want YOU to go to www.nhripp.ca and check out the new website for yourself.

In addition to its new look we have simplified navigating around the site by reducing the number of menu headings but have increased the amount of available information. We've added features such as Latest News and Quick Links which provide the most up-to-date information about the Plan and instant access to the most-visited sections of the website. The Resource Centre is the reference section of the site where members can find useful information such as Retirement 101, the Member's Handbook, Newsletters, FAQs and coming soon Plan presentations and webinars.

Access to more information continues with the *My InSite* member portal. The *My InSite* portal provides members with secure on-line access to their personal information 24/7. The portal is being rolled out in stages so some members will have access to it before others. However, all pensioners as well as all active members and certain former members will eventually be able to use the portal. They will be able to view their personal data, beneficiary information, contributions made to the Plan on their behalf and documents they have sent to, or received from, the Plan. The portal can also be used to update personal and beneficiary information and request a Pension Application form.

One of the best features of the portal is a new Pension Estimate Calculator. Active members can use it to calculate their monthly pension using any start date between their 55th birthday and December 1 of the year in which they turn 71. These pension estimates will be based on the contributions received to-date only, or with additional contributions projected to the date the active member wants his or her pension to begin. Calculations for former members (i.e. those who have deferred receipt of their pension) will be based only on the contributions the Plan has received for them. Users of the calculator can also select different forms of pension to see how doing so changes the amount they will receive each month. The new calculator a powerful tool to help you plan for retirement.

To access the portal, eligible members can click on the Member Sign In button on the www.nhripp.ca home page and follow the instructions. Members and pensioners will be provided with a Useful Information and Getting Started Guide when they are notified they can use the *My InSite* portal.

The *e-Site* employer portal will enhance the exchange of information between NHRIPP contributing employers and InBenefits. The *e-Site* portal is a secure, interactive online communication tool which will permit employers to remit pension contributions electronically, update and view employee/member information in real time and access useful reports including Plan documents and collective agreement information.

We truly believe these new features will make everyone's life a little easier.



FIVE TABLETS TO BE WON!

All active members who set up an account in *My InSite* before May 1, 2021 will be entered into a draw for one of five tablets.

Are you in?

KEEP IN TOUCH

Got a question about your Plan? Contact us!

Email: information@nhripp.ca

In Toronto:
905-889-6200 (Option 1)

Outside Toronto:
1-800-287-4816

Fax: 905-889-7313

Address:

Nursing Homes and Related
Industries Pension Plan
c/o InBenefits
310-105 Commerce Valley Drive West
Markham, Ontario L3T 7W3

You can also access Plan information online anytime at www.nhripp.ca



Final word

This newsletter provides summary information about the Nursing Homes and Related Industries Pension Plan in simple terms. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to provide advice. If there are any differences between the information provided in this newsletter and the legal documents that govern the Plan, the legal documents will apply. In accordance with applicable legislation, the NHRIPP Trustees may modify the Plan rules at any time, including changing benefit amounts, the types of benefits offered, the eligibility requirements and terminating the Plan.