



## **ARTA Board of Directors – Briefing Notes August 9, 2023, Edmonton, Alberta**

These briefing notes serve as the highlights from the August 9, 2023, Special ARTA Board of Directors Meetings. Some items and names have been left out either because they are considered confidential or are not items that can be shared at this time. These briefing notes do not serve as the official minutes of the meeting. If you have questions or concerns about any of the information contained within this report, please contact the CEO & Executive Director, Daniel Mulloy via email at [dmulloy@arta.net](mailto:dmulloy@arta.net) or via telephone at (780) 822-2400.

**1.0 Call to Order and O' Canada**

- 1.1 The meeting was called to order at 2:00pm.
- 1.2 Addition to 5.0 to include the Charitable Foundation casino update.
- 1.3 **MOTION 1:** Motion to approve the agenda as amended. **CARRIED**

**2.0 Introduction / Purpose of Meeting**

- 2.1 This special meeting was called to review the recommended Plan Design changes and the Monthly Renewal Rate recommendations.
- 2.2 This meeting was moved to August to ensure all operation items could be completed before the November 1, 2023, deadline.

**3.0 Proposed Plan Design Changes/Enhancements**

- 3.1 Travel Insurance Provider
  - 3.1.1 The current provider has not been meeting ARTA's needs with regards to member experience and claims processing.
  - 3.1.2 Four viable quotes were provided from emergency travel companies, that were narrowed down to two proposals.
  - 3.1.3 The Health Benefits Committee conducted a full marketing exercise for ARTA's Emergency Travel plan, and a finalist was selected as the new travel plan underwriter, with a new provider as the travel assistance provider.
  - 3.1.4 Any claims up to October 31, 2023, will be handled by previous assistance provider.
  - 3.1.5 **MOTION 2:** Motion to implement a new emergency travel provider as the new travel insurance provider and terminate the contract with current provider effective November 1, 2023. **CARRIED**
  - 3.1.6 **MOTION 3:** Motion for the CEO to enter negotiations with new emergency travel provider for a contract to come into effect November 1, 2023. **CARRIED**
- 3.2 Enhanced Generic Substitution Medications
  - 3.2.1 The Benefits Plan currently pays up to the name-brand drug price even if a generic of the medication is available if the drug is not listed in the Alberta Drug Benefit List.
  - 3.2.2 Savings are expected.
  - 3.2.3 Members who are affected by the change to generic medications will be notified and given a four-month grace period.
  - 3.2.4 **MOTION 4:** Motion to implement an Enhanced Generic Substitution policy for brand-name medications when a bio-equivalent generic medication is available effective November 1, 2023. **CARRIED**
- 3.3 Increase dental scaling coverage with special authorization.
  - 3.3.1 The special authorization would need to be completed by a physician and would be based on medical need.
    - 3.3.1.1 Special authorization would not come from a dentist.
  - 3.3.2 **MOTION 5:** Motion to implement an additional allowance up to 10 units of dental scaling units for members who have underlying health conditions who require additional scaling because of the health condition with ARTA's approved special authorization, effective November 1, 2023. **CARRIED**
- 3.4 Virtual Physician Services
  - 3.4.1 Virtual physician services provide opportunities for our members to access physicians when one may not be available.
  - 3.4.2 The virtual physician does not replace a family physician but rather provides acute care.
  - 3.4.3 There will be one application that includes all partner information.

- 3.4.4 Virtual care in Alberta is very limited at this time, and it is anticipated virtual care will be more of a popular topic in the coming years.
- 3.4.5 The rate with the provider is guaranteed for three years and the physicians will be province based.
- 3.4.6 This service is accessible while traveling, however if the traveler has emergency travel coverage, the travel coverage provider will need to be contacted first.
- 3.4.7 **MOTION 6:** Motion to implement virtual physician services with Maple Inc. effective November 1, 2023. **CARRIED**
- 3.5 Addition of weight-loss medications to base prescription drug plans
  - 3.5.1 The Health Wise Plus and Ultimate Health plans currently offer coverage for hair loss and erectile dysfunction. Weight loss medication is included under the lifestyle drug categories for members covered under the ARTA**Rx** plan.
  - 3.5.2 Wagovy, a weight-loss medication, is going to be rolled out in Canada in the coming months.
  - 3.5.3 **MOTION 7:** Motion to add weight-loss medications to the available lifestyle medications provided through Healthwise Plus and Ultimate Health Care to the maximum of \$150.00, effective November 1, 2023. **CARRIED**
- 3.6 Portable oxygen concentrator batteries
  - 3.6.1 **MOTION 8:** Motion to cover oxygen concentrator batteries when the batteries are bought separately from the oxygen concentrator company. **CARRIED**
- 3.7 Usual and Customary Expenses Updates
  - 3.7.1 To update the Usual and Customary Fees for acupuncture treatment, athletic therapy, naturopathic assessment, naturopathic treatment, and osteopath.
  - 3.7.2 ARTA likes to ensure that our benefits plans are keeping pace with the marketplace based on expenses submitted over the past year.
  - 3.7.3 The Usual and Customary Fees exist to ensure that providers are not claiming exorbitantly high fees that are above the average against the benefit plans.
  - 3.7.4 **MOTION 9:** Motion to update the Usual and Customary expenses permitted as follows, effective November 1, 2023. **CARRIED**

EXPENSE TYPE	CURRENT RATE	RATE AS OF NOV 1, 2023
Acupuncture Treatment	\$80	\$90
Athletic Therapy	\$80	\$85
Naturopathic Assessment	\$200	\$215
Naturopathic Treatment	\$110	\$125
Osteopath	\$115	\$125

#### 4.0 Confirmation of Monthly Rates

- 4.1 Review of the Renewal Rate Calculations as presented.
- 4.2 ARTA has seen an increase of 9.3%.
- 4.3 The dental experience was driven by an increase in the dental fee guide.
  - 4.3.1 Previously, increases occurred in even-numbered years, but an increase took place in 2023, an odd-numbered year.
  - 4.3.2 Each province received an increase, Alberta received a 6% increase, and Quebec received the highest increase of 9.8%.

- 4.4 **MOTION 10:** Motion to implement the following rate changes effective November 1, 2023. **CARRIED**

EDUCATION SECTOR		Rate Change
Extended Health Care	With Travel	+5.1%
	Without Travel	+12.3%
Dental Care		+20.0%

PUBLIC/PRIVATE SECTOR		Rate Change
Extended Health Care	With Travel	+6.2%
	Without Travel	+12.4%
Dental Care		+17.2%

- 4.5 **MOTION 11:** Motion to direct the ARTA Trust to transfer an amount from the invested travel fund to ARTA to be used to stabilize Emergency Travel rates for the 2023/2024 benefit year. **CARRIED**
- 4.6 **MOTION 12:** Motion to direct the ARTA Trust to transfer an amount from the invested travel fund to ARTA to be used to ensure sufficient cash flow on hand for the remainder of the 2022/2023 benefit years. **CARRIED**
- 4.7 ARTA has a communication strategy for releasing the decisions during this meeting. This meeting is considered confidential until the appropriate communications are released.

## 5.0 Next Meetings

- 5.1 Charitable Foundation Casino – August 19-20, 2023
- 5.1.1 Volunteers are still needed, please email the CEO if interested.
- 5.1.2 Volunteers out of town will be eligible to claim expenses.
- 5.2 The next Board of Directors Meeting will be held in person on September 12-13, 2023.
- 5.2.1 There will be special information for Branch Presidents.
- 5.2.2 More information will be provided closer to the date.
- 5.3 The next AGM will be held October 3-4, 2023.

## 6.0 Adjournment

- 6.1 **MOTION 13:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:29pm. **CARRIED**