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# ***CHOICE GROUP BENEFITS***

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Consultants and Administrators

## **PRODUCTS & SERVICES**



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Innovation



Solutions

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**WE'D LIKE TO PARTNER WITH YOU!**

## Table of Contents

Welcome to Choice Group Benefits.....	2
Our Resources .....	2
Group Marketing.....	2
Knowledge .....	2
Health, Drug, Dental & Vision Administration & ASO .....	3
Clarifications/Deviations .....	3
Company Profile & Experience.....	3
Pharmacy and Dental Network .....	4
Provider Portal.....	4
Health, Drug, Dental & Vision Claims Adjudication.....	4
Our Strategic Partners.....	4
Fraudulent Claims Audit/Protection for Your Plan.....	5
Health Care Spending Accounts.....	5
Wellness Accounts/ Personal Spending Accounts .....	5
Plan Sponsor Services .....	6
Plan Sponsor Service Centre.....	6
Plan Administration.....	6
Claims History Transfer.....	7
Reporting .....	7
Data Exports .....	7
Plan Member Services.....	8
Administrator & Plan Member Call Centers .....	8
Administration Services Only (ASO) Arrangements .....	9
Human Resource Services .....	10

## Welcome to Choice Group Benefits

At Choice Group Benefits we pride ourselves in providing value, demonstrating excellence in customer service, and building relationships based on honesty, openness and integrity. Our success is based on our dedication to serving the needs of our clients and being committed to a process that is more partnership, employee/employer “like” than anything else. Being part of your team, just not making a sale, is what we strive for in our business relationships.

## Our Resources

Frequently in this document you’ll see the phrase “Our Resources”. As well as the services we provide in-house, this phrase encompasses the multitude of suppliers that we source from to make-up the Administration, Products, Services and Delivery Platforms of each client’s plan. In cases where many suppliers combine to make-up a client’s total coverage, under the right circumstances we can bring them all together on one billing statement. In many cases we eliminate the redundancy of the past with multiple forms and procedures.

## Group Marketing

We’re often asked to participate in the marketing of a group. In almost every case regarding Health, Drug, Dental & Vision coverage, we price your plan in-house. This is a huge advantage for the client as we don’t have to wait for a supplier response which saves you a great deal of time collecting information, preparing it for distribution to suppliers, waiting for suppliers to complete their end and waiting for brokers to re-package/price the quote and finally deliver it to you. In most uncomplicated cases, we can price a plan in 48 hours.

## Knowledge

It is important for us that you know we appreciate what a daunting task shopping for group benefits and consultants can be. So you know, in my 20 years I have never met anyone who really understands the pricing process with group benefits or, and perhaps more importantly with insured products, the concepts of carrier pricing. That’s not a critical assessment of ability, simply a statement of fact. I’ve met some of the most capable, educated folks from business owners, key executives, heads of HR, plan managers and so on. They know what the industry wants them to know but, in most cases, are not familiar with the intricate nature of rate setting. Without proof, quotes and lowest price can often be a costly mistake.

I can tell you that, for the most part, the delivery platforms for group benefits are not the issue they were years ago. Technology has pretty much leveled the playing field for all suppliers however, the savings produced from new technologies have not trickled down to the consumer. In many cases this has generated huge excess premium payments by the consumer. We expose these to you and show how to end paying them.

For the most part, insurance, (Pooled) benefits, are that portion of your plan which is subject to the quotes/lowest price process. Health, Drug, Dental and Vision (Experienced Rated) benefits are a simple cash-in/cash-out event with the final price that arrives at your doorstep determined by the consultant.

For small or large, local or national employers, there are great products, services and procedures we can bring to your table with much of our efforts high-lighted in this document. Please know that our goal is to make sure your knowledge of group benefits pricing is top-of-the-class! You will learn what to look for, why the lowest price is not always the best deal and, how to price proof any quote supplied to you. I’ve never met anyone who enjoys making decisions on smoke & mirrors. We’ll give you the facts so you can make great group benefit decisions!

Kindest regards,

*Jim DuBois*

## **Health, Drug, Dental & Vision - Administration & ASO**

To adequately provide the right price and coverage, it's not unusual to find multiple suppliers from Our Resources participating in the same group benefit program. Instead of having separate billing statements from a multiple of suppliers, we make an effort from Our Resource to bring all suppliers onto one client billing statement. How does this benefit you:

- One enrolment/termination form for all suppliers,
- One Administration contract for all suppliers,
- One change form covers all suppliers,
- All benefit volumes and individual staff premium amounts in one billing statement,
- One monthly premium payment to one source,
- Coverage from each supplier participant contained into one electronic employee booklet and communication package.

Our Resources dove-tail with each other to deliver quality service and leading-edge technologies resulting in break-through pricing! Through the use of topic specific technology, no-touch processes, and comprehensive provider networks, Our Resources provide claim adjudication services for Health, Drug, Dental, Vision Care, Hospital, Medical Products & Services, Health Spending Accounts (HSAs) and for non-traditional taxable expenses such as fitness memberships, running shoes, and safety glasses.

Our Resources include proprietary adjudication platforms with the ability to manage the most complex plan designs and formularies, providing virtually unlimited plan design flexibility and customized formulary management. Our Resources has available pharmaceutical experts who can assist in better controlling costs through active drug plan management and help improve health outcomes through the active management of certain disease states and retrospective and prospective claims data analysis.

Requesting a report is easy. Our suite of standard reports are available to all clients on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Custom reports can also be produced and delivered via electronic data transfers to suit your needs.

### **Clarifications/Deviations**

Should the provisions or information in any quote from Our Resources be materially different from those you have provided us, we will provide a written document outlining those deviations.

### **Company Profile & Experience**

Choice Group Benefits was established in September 1995 with the goal of removing the confusion of group benefit pricing and management of plans for employers with under 100 staff. Our group benefit market reach includes Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba & Ontario. Increasing demands have saw us move into the larger employer market in Mid-2016 allowing us to focus on benefit coverage, pricing and delivery. Technology today in plan management, tracking, communication, adjudication & delivery has seen the private sector successfully challenge what used to be an “insurance carrier only” arena.

We enable plan sponsors to better control costs and improve health outcomes for employees and their families by using leading edge communications and processing technologies. Our specialty is Group Benefits, specifically Health, Drug, Dental & Vision “Experienced Rated” benefits as well as Life & Disability “Pooled” coverage and Group RRSP, Pension, PPP's etc. We provide vast knowledge on how these benefits are priced and share that with our clients. We prefer an educated client than a surprised one! We price your Health, Drug, Dental & Vision coverages in house and can usually complete that task within 48 hours of receiving previous claims, premium, census & experience information.

What we don't do is Human Resources Management or “Individual” investments or Retirement Savings.

## Pharmacy and Dental Network

Our Resources manage a supplier network of over 9,370 pharmacies and 18,000 dentists across Canada. Our Resources benefit card is recognized and accepted by pharmacies and dentists nationwide and is “Private Labeled” for each employer.

Our Resources allow for formulary and price file management which will ensure that your plan design is administered, and costs are controlled, as outlined in any Preferred Provider Agreements (PPO). Other programs such as; Mandatory Generic Substitution, Dispensing Fee Caps, Ingredient Cost Mark-up Limits, Usual and Customary Dispensing Fee Monitoring, Initial Day Supply Rules, Prior Authorization Programs, Drug Utilization Reviews and Narcotic Abuse Management are some additional features available through Our Resources that help our clients manage costs without impacting on plan design or the plan member experience.

Within the Our Resources service departments, there is a team of Dental Consultants as well as Pharmacists, Consulting Physicians and on-site Pharmacy Technicians who are responsible for drug formulary design, daily price file maintenance and new drug monograph reviews and therapeutic classification.

## Provider Portal

Our Resources offer secure and efficient platforms for both plan members and their providers by enabling extended healthcare providers to submit claims on behalf of their patients at point-of-service. This reduces out-of-pocket expenses for plan members and eliminates paper claim submission. Shared provider portals feature technology that is easy to use and compatible with all providers. The portals current database stands at 100,000 accredited providers which ensures accuracy, security, and efficiency in transmitting, processing, and paying claims. It also allows for co-ordination of benefits and payments from Health Care Spending Accounts.

## Health, Drug, Dental & Vision Claims Adjudication

Our Resources Health and Dental Claims Departments manage the processing of all extended Health, Drug, Dental and Vision claims for plan members and providers. To ensure continuous high levels of service during peak periods, our resources staff members are trained to work-share between teams to offset increased volumes.

As part of the Adjudication Team, there is a Continuity & Quality Process Team Leader who ensures that all claims practices are maintained, coordinates legislative changes that impacts claims adjudication, and assesses any new products or services in the marketplace to determine the impact on claims adjudication. The Team Leader also co-ordinates all project efforts within Health, Drug, Dental and Vision claims with a focus on continuous improvement.

Our Resources platforms are the perfect match for multi-provincial employers. Every province and territory has its own adjudication requirements. Separating claims into specific provinces allows employers to have their plans rate structure representative of the province where coverage is delivered and expenses incurred.

## Our Strategic Partners

As mentioned earlier, Our Resources represents the whole of the strategic relationships we rely on to bring our clients a professional, seamless result. Canada’s most prestigious and results orientated suppliers are represented in this block. **Insured products include:** Life, Accidental Death & Dismemberment, Short & Long Term Disability, Critical Illness, Travel and Stop-Loss insurance coverage. **Day-to-day, “Cash-in/Cash-out” products include:** Health, Drug, Dental and Vision products. **Specialty products and services:** Employee Assistance Programs, Stop-Loss insurance, Best Doctors & Second Opinion Consult medical review services and, the Humaniqa HR assistant services program.

## **Fraudulent Claims Audit/Protection for Your Plan**

Our Resources claims systems have many controls designed to help minimize the chances of paying fraudulent claims. Claims Assessors are trained to flag and report any unusual or suspicious claims and they routinely question certain types of claims to confirm that the services billed for were performed. Our Resources specially trained Investigative Services Experts are also instrumental in helping us detect and prevent invalid health and dental claims so they can identify fraud and abuse opportunities before they occur. They follow-up on every situation that raises a concern and take appropriate action if an improper claim has occurred.

Our Resources suppliers reference and communicate with some of Canada's leaders in fraud protection, such as the Canadian Health Care Anti-fraud Association and the National Health Care Anti-fraud Association. These organizations, amongst others, serve as a valuable reference and awareness resource in helping develop new methods of fraud prevention and investigation.

Our Resources plan member websites and claims adjudication systems are designed with privacy controls and security features to prevent errors or incorrect claiming. The same controls for all Health, Drug, Dental and Vision claims are applied whether claims are sent by mail, fax, electronically or by plan member online services. Our Resources claim systems are designed to process web-claims with additional checks and audits to ensure they meet privacy and protection requirements.

## **Health Care Spending Accounts**

A Health Care Spending Account (HCSA) can be a great addition to traditional benefit plans. An HCSA provides a predetermined amount of money for plan members and their dependents to cover Health, Drug, Dental and/or Vision expenses that are not covered by the core benefits program.

Employers benefit from fixed costs, making yearly budgeting easier to manage. For example, an employer may elect to provide a benefit program for Drugs and Out of Country Coverage only (Catastrophic coverage) with Stop-Loss coverage and an HCSA for all other benefits.

Employees benefit from the freedom to use their benefit dollars to best suit their needs, and the needs of their family. This includes all standard benefits that would be covered under the traditional plan, plus any item classified as a Medical Expense under the Income Tax Act.

Our Resources Claims Administration is fully capable of handling all HCSA claims, as well as plan design options. Employee website and Explanation of Benefits (EOB) provide for running balances in the account so the employee is always aware of how much is remaining.

## **Wellness Accounts/ Personal Spending Accounts**

With the ever changing times, some plan sponsors are looking for ways to attract talent through creative compensation mechanisms. Wellness accounts or Personal Spending Accounts (PSAs) offer flexibility and choice and they empower employees to take a proactive approach in managing staff well-being.

Our resources can align Wellness Accounts to meet the specific objectives and goals of each client by covering only the expenses that the employer deems eligible. For example, plan sponsors can choose to allow a long list of items such as gym memberships, fitness equipment, weight-loss programs and self-improvement courses, just to name a few. Your wellness program can be as limited or as open as you require and you decide the amount, the frequency of deposits, and the billing preference ("pay-as-you-go" or fixed amount).

Taxable benefit reports are available for claimed items.

## **Plan Sponsor Services**

Unless otherwise noted, quoted Administration Fees include allowances for standard administration services as follows:

- Production and distribution of a “Private-Label” Pay-direct Card (Drug, Dental, Vision & Paramedicals).
- Full claims adjudication services
- Bi-lingual Call center support
- Internet based administration
- Website claims administration and adjudication for employees
- Electronic billing (e-bills) provided via Our Resources secure websites
- Electronic employee booklets and employer contracts
- Member eligibility updates, claims validation and processing
- Electronic standard forms necessary to administer the plan (enrolment, claims, application, etc.)
- Standard reports
- Amendments/Revisions
- Direct Deposit for claims reimbursement
- Auto Debit Premium collection
- Electronic claims submission from various paramedical practitioners, vision and dental providers
- Other services requested may be provided subject to additional charges.

## **Plan Sponsor Service Centre**

Our Resources Client Service Teams provide daily support to Plan Sponsors, managing everything from plan administration to billing. They are available 8:30am to 10:00pm, Monday thru Friday, Eastern Standard Time

## **Plan Administration**

Our Resources provide one-stop benefits administration. These easy to use systems require minimal training for benefit plan administrators. Detailed user administration guides are available on-line with step-by-step instructions on how to log on, navigate and perform all of the sites most commonly-used functions.

Our Resources administration systems can accommodate multiple suppliers on one billing statement thus providing our clients with the flexibility of choice for the insurance carriers they'd prefer to work with. The systems allow us to work with you and all carriers for pooled benefits (i.e. Life, Accidental Death & Dismemberment, Short & Long Term Disability, Critical Illness) as Our Resources platforms are built to provide eligibility feeds and billings for multiple carriers including ASO benefits administration..

Our Resources Administration platforms are accessed through password-protected Plan Sponsor Services websites. Some examples of changes that can be made include; employee enrolment/ termination/ reinstatement and employee record changes. Plan administrators can also generate and print coverage confirmations for plan members, view details of the benefit coverage, plan set-up and rates, download and print a wide range of standard administration forms, over-age dependent letters and non-evidence maximum letters, view and print monthly premium billing statements (in summary and in detail), and schedule and view various administration and financial reports.

There are many administrative reports available through the administration systems. Plan Sponsors are able to create and save reports and templates. We would be pleased to provide you with more details as required.

Once on our program, there is no need to gather employee census information when shopping the plan. We maintain an up-to-date employee census of your group. We can quote your coverage without you ever having to lift a finger!

## Claims History Transfer

We can assist with the transfer of member claims history. A file requirement is available upon request. There is usually a fee based on the time and effort required. We can discuss this further at implementation.

## Reporting

### Standard Suite of Reports – Claims

Requesting a report is easy. Our Resources list of standard reports is available to all clients on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual basis. Here are some of the standard reports available to our clients:

- Claims Extract
- Claiming Frequency
- Ranking of Usage
- Detailed Provider Summary
- Dental – Claims by Category, Dental Rejects Summary Report
- Drug – Type & Detail (Brand/Generic/Single Source), Top 50 (or customized #) DINs, Claims by Category, Provider Summary, Summary of Rejected Claims (including DINs not covered)
- EHC – Claims by Category
- Active Certificate Detail Report

### Standard Suite of Reports – Administration

Administration is critical and we understand the importance of being able to run reports to simplify your administrative requirements. Here are some of the standard reports available to our clients:

- Monthly Client Billing (can be broken down by carrier/ insurer)
- Accounting Reports (by location)
- Payroll Reports
- Member Benefit Statements
- Reduction of Benefit Reports
- Overage Dependent Reports and Letters
- Non-Evidence Maximum (NEM) Reports and Letters

## Data Exports

Data is not only available in hardcopy format, we can accommodate your request for a data dump of information so you can analyze it to best suit your needs. The data is extracted to Our Resources secure FTP sites – ready for pickup.

We work with our clients in developing various custom reports to meet their specific needs. We would be pleased to review any customized report requirements for your company.



## **Plan Member Services**

Our Resources recognize that happy plan members make for happy plan sponsors and their Administrators. In addition to the **Administrator & Plan Member** bilingual call centers below, password protected plan member websites are available to plan members 24/7. The following are some of the highlights of what plan members can do on line:

- View claims and benefit coverage
- Register for direct bank deposit of claim payments and to receive electronic claim statements (rather than by mail)
- View all claim statements for Health, Drug, Dental, Vision and HCSA claims
- Check their Health Spending Account balance (if applicable)
- Submit eligible Health, Drug, Dental, Vision and HCSA claims
- Obtain claim forms, update personal information (optional at plan sponsor discretion), view and/or print their Benefit Booklet, etc.

Plan members can view detailed information about their health and dental benefits in an easy-to-read format. Our online benefit coverage feature provides an outline of the member's coverage under each expense type based on their particular plan, the services covered, benefit maximums, co-insurance and deductibles.

## **Administrator & Plan Member Call Centers**

Our Resources provide member call centers staffed with highly-trained and knowledgeable representatives. These call centers handle both phone and web enquiries from plan administrators/sponsors, plan members, advisors and suppliers.

All centers operate from 8:00am to 10:00pm, Monday to Friday, EST.

## Administration Services Only (ASO) Arrangements

Under an ASO contract, Our Resources act strictly as the plan administrator while the client retains the full financial liability for the contract provisions and payment of benefits and expenses incurred under the plan. An ASO account is established for each client which the client funds with regular deposits as outlined under the ASO Funding Options section below. The ASO account is then debited with the following expense loads: **paid claims, expense charges, pooled benefit charges, administration/consulting fees and, applicable taxes.**

## ASO Funding Arrangement Options

We can arrange two types of billing options as follows:

- **Option 1 - Budgeted ASO:** At the beginning of each month the client pays to the plan administrator a deposit amount equal to one month's expected claims, expenses and applicable taxes.

The two common methods of establishing the monthly payment are:

- **Fixed Dollar Amount:** The monthly deposit is a fixed monthly deposit, regardless of the claims activity; or;
  - **Budgeted Rates:** The monthly deposit is equal to the single/family/couple (optional) monthly rates, multiplied by the number of single/family/couple units covered at the beginning of the month, regardless of the claims activity.
- **Option 2 - Invoicing in Arrears:** Under this option, the administrator provides a monthly invoice of the amount due which is equal to the sum of the claims, expenses and applicable taxes for the previous month.

Regardless of which option is chosen, the client is required to provide a deposit which is equal to approximately six-weeks of expected claims, expenses and applicable taxes at inception.

On an annual basis, the level of contribution or deposit payment required is reviewed for the proper funding of the plan moving forward. Our standard is to provide a 45-days advance written notice of any changes in rates or deposit amounts.

### NOTE:

*The funding status of a benefits plan, commonly referred to as funded or unfunded, impacts how Premium Tax and Sales Tax in Ontario and Quebec are calculated. We will calculate and remit Premium and Sales Tax based on the funding status each client declares. We recommend that the client seeks the advice of its tax advisor to ensure it is well supported in its interpretation of current Premium and Sales Tax legislation in Ontario and Quebec as it relates to an Administrative Services Only (ASO) benefit plan.*

## ASO Expense Guarantees

All quotes standardly include a minimum 36 month administration and consultant rate guarantees. The guarantees are subject to the following conditions:

- There are no major plan changes
- There are no changes in legislation that would materially alter the risk and affect the cost of the plan
- The number of lives in the group does not change by more than 10%.

Stop-Loss Pooling and Out of Country charges will be reviewed after 16 months initially, and 12 months thereafter. At that time, we will also provide you with the claims experience report for Health, Drug, Dental and Vision to review for the proper funding of the plan moving forward.

## **Human Resource (HR) Services**

Our Resources has includes an HR offering from Humanika who offer our clients a comprehensive web-based HR business solution that supports small to medium businesses across Canada in managing their HR needs. Every day, many companies face difficult human resource issues, often without the in-house expertise of an HR professional to assist them. Humanika is an online tool that can assist these organizations in managing their HR issues.

The online subscription based advisory services gives members access to a wealth of information, along with time and money saving HR tools and templates that are quick and easy to customize. For those tough HR issues, clients can also access unlimited LIVE HELP from a team of highly-qualified Certified HR Professionals (CHRP) who will respond within 24 hours, guaranteed!

Managing HR can be challenging and time consuming. When it comes to HR, there is a lot that an owner or business manager needs to know, a large amount of paperwork and plenty at stake if a wrong decision is made. Whether you need a sample letter, policy, employee handbook, or want to speak to an HR professional about an employee issue, Humanika is there to help.

What makes Humanika truly unique is that it has been designed to work across Canada. Whether your company is in British Columbia, Ontario, Newfoundland, or anywhere in-between, they will find tools, templates and expertise customized to match the laws of their province. Humanika is also completely bilingual!

Through the service of Humanika we can provide affordable access to HR expertise and tools for Small and Medium Enterprises.

### ***Humanika – On-line***

- UNLIMITED ACCESS to the library of templates of job descriptions, forms, policies, letters, etc.
- Legislative library for both provincial and federal Canadian labour laws.
- Online filing cabinet for all your employee information.
- Free webcasts and online management training videos.
- 30% discount on online health and safety courses.
- Customizable employee handbook tool.

### ***Humanika – On Demand*** (additional fees would apply)

- UNLIMITED ACCESS to all Humanika On-line offers.
- UNLIMITED LIVE HELP from our team of Certified Human Resource Professionals (CHRP) for any of your difficult HR questions.

Visit the Humanika website: [www.humanika.com](http://www.humanika.com)