

# Wellness

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The financial value of the long term disability benefit is not always well understood by Plan members. Long term disability insurance can help protect you and your family if an illness or accident leaves you unable to work by replacing a portion of your income. Long term disability coverage is mandatory for eligible employees and is a key part of the group benefits coverage offered by your employer. The BCPVPA has been sponsoring the long term disability benefit since 1988. Eligible Plan members include Principals and Vice Principals, Exempt and Non-Unionized Support Staff. Details of the mandatory Plan eligibility and coverage are below:

The primary objectives of the Plan are:

- To provide Plan members with income security in the event of absence from work due to illness or accident
- Provide a monthly benefit income replacement aligned with the roles and responsibilities of the executives in the K-12 sector in British Columbia
- Offer Plan options that include benefit inflation protection (also known as a Cost of Living Adjustment) to shelter long term claimants from inflationary impact as claimants can be in receipt of benefits up to age 65 or 35 years of full unreduced pension
- The Plan must qualify with pension plan requirements (Plan members and School Districts will not make pension contributions while the Plan member is in receipt of long term disability benefits though Plan members continue to accrue pensionable service)

<b>Participation:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>
<b>Minimum number of hours worked per week:</b>	<b>50% of a normal work schedule with a minimum of 35 hours per week</b>
<b>Eligibility period:</b>	<b>Coverage begins the first day of the month coincident with or next following the date of employment</b>
<b>Percentage and maximum of benefit:</b>	<b>60% of the first \$7,500 of gross monthly earnings and 50% of the balance, rounded to the next \$1, if not already a multiple, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per month</b>
<b>Elimination Period:</b>	<b>Benefits begin after 117 calendar days or expiration of benefits under the Employer's sick leave plan to a maximum of 120 sick leave days, whichever is later</b>
<b>Maximum Benefit Period:</b>	<b>To age 65 or 35 years of pensionable service, whichever is earlier</b>

# Long Term Disability 101

**Do you understand your Long Term Disability (LTD) coverage?**

**Much like your home insurance, you might not think too much about your LTD Plan, but it's there when you need it.**

Government programs such as Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits do not provide significant benefit payments on a long term basis, which is the gap filled by long term disability coverage. Without long term disability coverage, many families may need to make drastic financial changes. Disabled employees complete claim forms, including a portion describing their medical situation that is completed by their physician, and submit them to the insurer for review. The forms, a guide to the claim process, and other information about long term disability coverage are available at [bcpvpabenefits.ca](http://bcpvpabenefits.ca).

From a premium rate perspective, the Plan can boast about the longest stretch of rate stability in the education sector: 18 years with no rate adjustment. This almost unheard-of rate stability can be attributed to the following key factors:

- Plan member demographic stability
- Financial stewardship from the BCPVPA
- Consistently lower claiming patterns compared to other employee groups and sectors

While Plan member demographics have remained stable and the financial stewardship by BCPVPA continues to be a foundational element of the Plan, the Plan has seen an increase in Plan members who need access to the long term disability benefit in the last three years. The increased number of claims and benefits being paid is a challenge for the Plan and there has been a shift in the types of disabilities that the Plan is supporting. From recent data, the top three types of disability are:

- Mental Disorders – 37%
- Neoplasms (Cancer) – 21%

- Nervous System Disorders (Strokes and Multiple Sclerosis) – 11%

In comparison, data from ten years ago did not include mental disorders in the top three disability types at all. The Plan has historically seen Neoplasms and Musculoskeletal (physical injuries) as the leading disability claim types. While many disability plans in Canada have seen significant increases in the incidence of mental health disability claims, the results from the BCPVPA Plan over the past five years was a leading factor in the implementation of the BCPVPA Benefits Plan Early Intervention Program. This program's goal is to support and empower Plan members to stay at work if possible or resume their work roles in a safe and supportive manner. For more information on the program, visit [bit.ly/humanworksEIP](http://bit.ly/humanworksEIP)

The primary objectives of the BCPVPA Plan remain unchanged. Members that need to access the Plan will benefit from:

- Best in class monthly income replacement plan
- A monthly income replacement amount that ensures financial needs are met during disability
- The continued accrual of pensionable service without having to make pension contributions

No one expects to be disabled from work, but recent statistics estimate that 1 in 4 employees will access long term disability benefits during their career. For the past 32 years, the BCPVPA Plan has played a crucial role in ensuring members are protected financially should they suffer an adverse health outcome.

We encourage our members to learn more about the BCPVPA Plan. Information can be found by visiting <https://bcpvpabenefits.ca>