

Staying in Touch

A newsletter for people
receiving a Canada Pension
Plan disability benefit



No. 3, February 2004

Welcome to the third edition of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Disability newsletter, *Staying in Touch*. This newsletter is our way of telling you and your family important news concerning the CPP Disability program and your benefit. If it was mailed to you in error, we apologize.



Responding to the **CHANGING NEEDS** OF TODAY'S SOCIETY

Today, new technology, medical treatments and skills training make it possible for some people with severe disabilities or illnesses to work as volunteers, return to school or re-enter the workforce on a more regular basis. The CPP encourages and supports clients in these efforts.

This publication is available in alternative formats.
Aussi disponible en français sous le titre *Maintenir le lien*.



Thinking of VOLUNTEERING OR RETURNING TO SCHOOL?

- Your disability benefit will continue if you volunteer or return to school.
- Canada Student Loans, the Canada Study Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities and the Canada Study Grant for High-need Students with Permanent Disabilities are available to post-secondary students who qualify. These loans and grants help cover expenses related to tuition, accommodation, books and other education-related costs. Please visit www.canlearn.ca for more information.

Thinking of RETURNING TO WORK?

You can explore the possibility of returning to the workforce while still collecting your benefit. CPP Disability has ways of helping you return to work:

- **Allowable earnings:** You can now work and earn up to \$4,000 in 2004 without losing your CPP disability benefit. If you can work only once in a while, you may be able to earn more than \$4,000 while still receiving your benefit. Once you earn \$4,000, it is important to contact us so we can discuss your individual situation.

The allowable earnings policy helped a client in Nova Scotia with severe circulation problems work temporarily during an election. Although his medical condition prevented him from continuing to work, he was able to earn money for a short time while receiving a CPP disability benefit.

- **Three-month work trial:** If you return to work on a regular basis, you can continue to receive a CPP disability benefit for three months. This gives you and the CPP time to evaluate your ability to work regularly. If after three months you are still working and coping with the demands of the job, your CPP disability benefit will stop.

The three-month work trial allowed a clerical worker in Saskatchewan with arthritis to test her ability to perform the duties of her job. Her employer helped her to find ways to meet her special needs. She is currently working full time and no longer receives a CPP disability benefit.



Quick Facts

- Last year, approximately 285,000 persons with disabilities and 91,000 of their children received \$2.8 billion in CPP disability benefits.
- The average disability benefit last year was \$721.92 per month.
- Approximately 1,350 CPP disability beneficiaries successfully returned to work last year either on their own or with the CPP's assistance.

○ Vocational rehabilitation:

This program helps clients who are interested in returning to work once their medical condition has stabilized. You can talk to a case manager to determine whether you are eligible. If you are eligible, a variety of vocational services is available.

A client in Ontario, previously employed as a heavy labourer, suffered severe leg injuries in an accident. The Vocational Rehabilitation program helped him retrain as a technical support specialist for a telephone call centre. He returned to work on a regular basis in a position that suited his physical needs and he no longer receives a CPP disability benefit.



○ Fast track re-application:

If you return to work and your benefit stops, the CPP can help if you become disabled again. If the same condition returns within five years and you must stop working, you may re-apply using our shorter application process. To re-qualify, you must have made enough contributions to the CPP after your benefit ended.

A client in Ontario with a heart condition returned to work in his own business and his CPP benefit stopped. Once working, he began paying CPP contributions again. After four years, the client's heart condition worsened and he had to stop working. He promptly reported this change to the CPP and his benefit began again within a few weeks.



Get all the **BENEFITS YOU ARE ENTITLED TO**

Benefits for children – While you are receiving a CPP disability benefit, your children under the age of 25 may also be eligible for a benefit. Children between the ages of 18 and 25 must be in school full time to be eligible. These benefits are not automatic – you or your children must apply.

Benefits for seniors – Once you turn 65, your CPP disability benefit will automatically change to a CPP retirement pension. If you are within six months of your 65th birthday, you should apply for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension. If your income is low, you can also apply for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). The Allowance is an OAS benefit available to seniors from 60 to 64 years of age who are spouses or common-law partners of OAS pensioners.

Benefits for survivors – The CPP pays benefits to the families of deceased CPP contributors who qualify. These include the death benefit, the survivor's pension and the children's benefit. The OAS program also offers the Allowance for the survivor.

A few reminders about **TAXES and TAX CREDITS**

- **CPP disability benefits are taxable.** To avoid paying a large amount of tax when you file your income tax return, you can ask the CPP to have tax deducted from your monthly benefit payments.
- If CPP benefits were paid back to your private disability insurance company at the time you were granted CPP benefits, you may be eligible for a partial refund of the tax you paid on that amount. Contact the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency to obtain more information.
- The **Disability Tax Credit (DTC)** may be available to people with a severe and prolonged impairment. The DTC eligibility criteria have undergone some changes for 2003. The **Medical Expense Tax Credit (METC)** may be available to people who have paid medical expenses. New items have been added to the 2003 list of eligible expenses. For more information on the METC and the DTC, please contact the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.

UPDATE:
Parliamentary Subcommittee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities

The Subcommittee studied the CPP Disability program and published its report in June 2003. To view it, visit the parliamentary Web site at:

www.parl.gc.ca/disability

The Government response is at:

www.hrdc.gc.ca

New SERVICES and BENEFITS

NEW! An additional way to obtain your tax information slips

In addition to contacting us by telephone, by mail or in person, you have another option. You can now obtain your Old Age Security (OAS) and Canada Pension Plan (CPP) tax information slips from the Internet. The choice is yours. This secure service is found at www.hrdc.gc.ca/isp under “E-Services”. The Tax Information Slips online service allows you to:

- view and print your OAS and CPP tax information slips from the Internet for your income tax return.
- **notify** us online if you wish to stop receiving your OAS and CPP tax information slips by mail.

Each time you use this service, you will need your access code,* which can be found in the upper-right corner of your enclosed tax information slips. **Keep this top portion of your slip** to keep your access code safe and secure. Protect your personal information at all times.

* This e-service is not yet available to you if:

- you receive an OAS or CPP benefit as a result of a social security agreement with another country, or
- you are between 18 and 25 years of age and receive a CPP children’s benefit.

If this is your situation, an access code will not appear on your tax information slip.

Compassionate Care Benefit

The demands of caring for a gravely ill or dying family member can affect the employment of Canadians and the economic security of their families. Beginning January 4, 2004, the **Employment Insurance (EI) Compassionate Care Benefit** will be available to EI-eligible workers who must be absent from work to care for a child, parent, spouse or common-law partner who has a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death. Visit www.hrdc.gc.ca for more information.

We want to STAY IN TOUCH

If you are receiving payments from CPP Disability, it is important to contact us if you:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ would like help in returning to work ○ have tried to return to work and were not successful ○ earn \$4,000 or more from employment in 2004 ○ note improvements in your medical condition ○ adopt or have a baby this year (you may be eligible for additional children’s benefits) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ change custody arrangements for children under 18 years of age ○ change your address ○ receive your benefit by direct deposit and change banks or bank accounts ○ have questions about your CPP disability benefit |
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The CPP may contact you in the future to update information on your file and offer support and services.

Disability help and information

How to reach the CPP & OAS

- By telephone:** toll-free from Canada and the U.S.
1 800 277-9914 (for information)
1 800 255-4786 (for TTY users only)
- From outside Canada and the U.S. (English and French):
1 613 957-1954
- In person:** Find your local HRDC office in your phone directory's government pages
- By mail:** P.O. Box 8953, Station "T", Ottawa ON K1G 3J2
- By e-mail:** isp-psr.mail-poste@hrdc-drhc.gc.ca
- On the Internet:** www.hrdc.gc.ca/isp

How to reach the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency

- By telephone:** toll-free from Canada and the U.S.
1 800 959-8281 (for information)
1 800 665-0354 (for TTY users only)
- On the Internet:** www.ccra.gc.ca/disability

Other Internet resources:

- **The Government of Canada**
canada.gc.ca
- **Persons with Disabilities Online**
www.pwd-online.ca
- **Canada Benefits**
www.canadabenefits.gc.ca
- **Disability WebLinks**
www.disabilityweblinks.ca

Call 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232) if:

- you don't have Internet access and want to know where you can access free Internet services in your community.
- you need information on other Government of Canada programs and services.