

NOVEMBER 2021

RIELITY CHECK

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOUIS RIEL TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION www.lrta.ca



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Marcela Cabezas



The pandemic has taught us many valuable lessons. Amongst them, it has helped to reinforce the value of connection with others. This past weekend, I had the chance to Zoom call with some teacher friends. Having been placed together for our first student teaching practicum, we remain in touch and present in each other's lives almost twenty years later. This group of dear friends, who teach all over the city and even out of the country, are a source of strength in my life. It is a group who understands the realities of teaching during a pandemic and in sharing our stories, we find strength and can offer each other support.

There are of course the annual challenges, for instance. November brings with it its own list of demands. The preparation of report cards and student progress conferences do not make this time of year an easy one. Moreover, as we watch provincial test positivity rates creep upward, we also see levels of concern creep upward as well.

That said, there are some small graces that are important to acknowledge, namely that students aged five to eleven are now eligible to get vaccinated. While this process will take time, knowing another layer of protection can now exist in all classrooms may help alleviate some of the anxiety presently felt in early years classrooms. There is also the knowledge that December is around the corner and that winter break will provide an opportunity to rest and recharge.

For some, December 23rd may feel too far distant. With many teachers feeling an overwhelming sense of exhaustion, finding ways to accept these feelings and emotions we are having without judgement is crucial. Dr. Susan David, a Harvard psychologist has spoken on the importance of emotional agility in both her **TED Talk** and in a **podcast** interview with New York Times bestselling author and former Winnipegger, Kate Bowler. (I have embedded the links to both if you are interested in exploring either.) Key takeaways include acknowledging that we are not our emotions, but rather our emotions provide us with important points of introspection. When linked to our values, these emotional signposts help us to reflect upon the things that matter most to us during these challenging times.

As we continue onward, please ensure that you are not only staying connected with colleagues, friends, and family but also with yourself. There is strength, support, and wisdom to be found through connection.

As always, your Association is here to support you. Please do not hesitate to contact us here at the LRTA office.

Take care of yourself and take care of each other,

Marcela





MTS WORKLOAD SURVEY

Vice President Bargaining—Scott Wood



The MTS Workload Survey is available to all MTS members through their worksite from November 15th to December 7th. This survey, typically held every four years, provides MTS with a snapshot of the workload issues facing members of MTS across Manitoba.

Locally, LRTA uses the data from this survey to identify trends that may be impacting our members. Information collected often will appear during the bargaining process to support the positions we are taking with the Division. The data, of course, is presented in a summary form and no individuals can be identified from the data.

Four years ago, LRTA led the Province for member participation, with more than 85% completing the survey. Although this is not a competition with other Associations, it is important because with a larger response rate we get more accurate end results.

Please ensure that you complete the survey and return it to the Council Rep at your worksite before December 7th. The survey typically takes about 20 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact Scott, LRTA Vice-President, Collective Bargaining at cblrta@shaw.ca.

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MTS PROVINCIAL DENTAL PLAN PROPOSAL DECLINED

President - Marcela Cabezas

As part of its preparations to move toward Provincial Bargaining, MTS began the process of seeking interest from various locals to see which Associations might be interested in switching over to a new MTS provincial dental plan. Presently, MTS oversees 31 different Blue Cross dental plans which correspond to various local teacher associations.

MTS presented its proposed plan to the LRTA Executive on October 6th. This information was shared with the LRTA Council on October 20th. Further discussions on the matter were had at the LRTA Executive Meeting on November 3rd.

The Association was presented with two options, to remain in our current plan or to switch to the proposed MTS plan. At its core, both Executive and Council considered the proposed changes.

While the projected premiums for the proposed provincial plan were nominally lower, both Executive and Council were concerned by the significant reduction in coverage for Level 2 services (implants, inlays, crowns, bridges, etc.) Based on the data shared, the Executive did not feel that a \$250 increase to the combined maximum of services per participant outweighed the impact of a thirty percent reduction of coverage for Level Two services to the 900+ LRTA dental plan subscribers and the various participants each of those subscribers have attached to their plan. As the third largest Association in the province, our plan is quite stable and not subject to a lot of volatility. The addition of more members aside from our own to a plan would not improve things dramatically for our subscribers.

The other dilemma faced by the LRTA was the timeline proposed by MTS which was requesting a response from the Association by January 2022. For a proposed change to a benefit plan to be brought to the membership for consideration, a motion would need to be passed at a general assembly meeting. Currently, the next LRTA General Assembly is scheduled for April 2022. Although provisions exist in the LRTA Constitution to allow for a special assembly meeting to be called by the Executive and Council, neither governing body deemed it was in the best interest of members to proceed with calling a special assembly meeting to examine the matter.

As Bill 45 has yet to be proclaimed, the foray into provincial bargaining with the province has not officially commenced. When it does, this process will likely be lengthy. As such, the Council has determined remaining with the status quo to be the best course of action. Future opportunities shall present themselves down the road wherein we hope MTS shall present our members with a more comparable or improved plan to consider.

Option A: Stay in Current LRTA Dental Plan

- ▶ Present Coverage
 - ▶ 80% Level 1: Basic (majority of services)
 - ▶ 80% Level 2: Major and Restorative (implants, inlays, crowns, bridges)
 - ▶ 50% Level 3: Orthodontics (for eligible children)
- ▶ All combined to a max of \$1500/person/year
- ▶ Currently 900+ LRTA members are part of this plan
- ▶ **Projected premiums**
 - ▶ \$40.00 single
 - ▶ \$84.00 couple
 - ▶ \$128.50 family

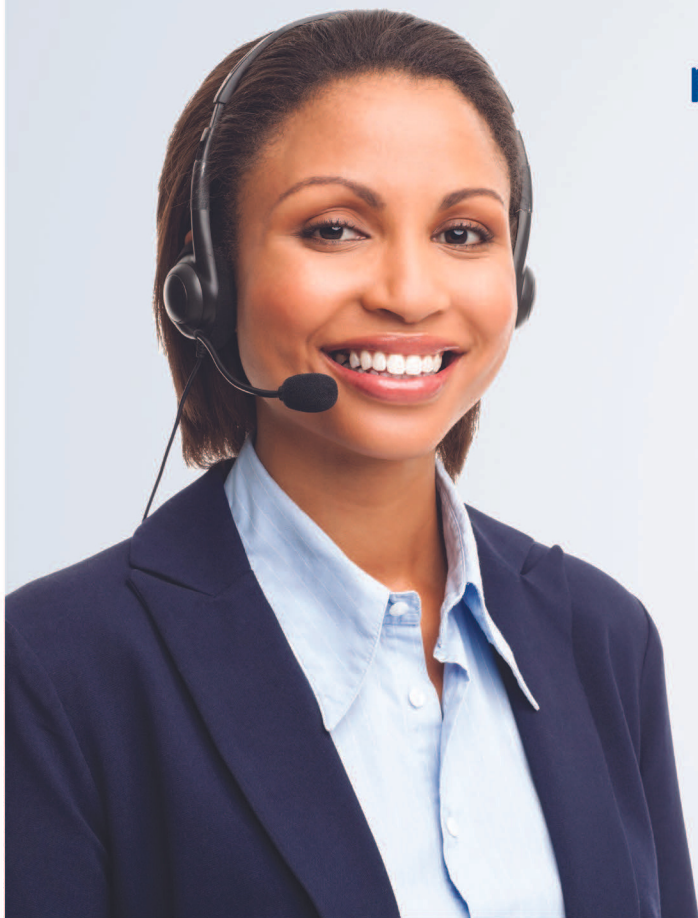
Option B: Join MTS Proposed Provincial Plan

- ▶ Coverage Includes
 - ▶ 80% Level 1: Basic
 - ▶ 50% Level 2: Major (Decrease)
 - ▶ 50% Level 3: Orthodontics
- ▶ All combined to max of \$1750/person/year (Increase)
- ▶ Currently, two other Local Associations have agreed to join this plan.
- ▶ Other Local Associations are in the process of considering their options.
- ▶ Benefit of having more members in the plan
- ▶ **Projected Premiums**
 - ▶ \$39.50 single
 - ▶ \$83.00 couple
 - ▶ \$127.50 family

Programme d'aide aux membres et à leurs familles (PAMF)

Nous pouvons vous aider.

Un soutien gratuit et confidentiel pour
les membres admissibles et leurs familles.



Le soutien et les services offerts par HumanaCare peuvent vous aider dans les domaines suivants :

- Couples et relations
- Famille et éducation des enfants
- Stress
- Anxiété
- Dépression
- Consommation de substances
- Soutien juridique et financier
- Chagrin et deuil
- Accompagnement en gestion et transition de carrière
- Gestion comportementale
- Alimentation et nutrition
- Stress professionnel
- Intimidation et harcèlement
- Crise et traumatisme

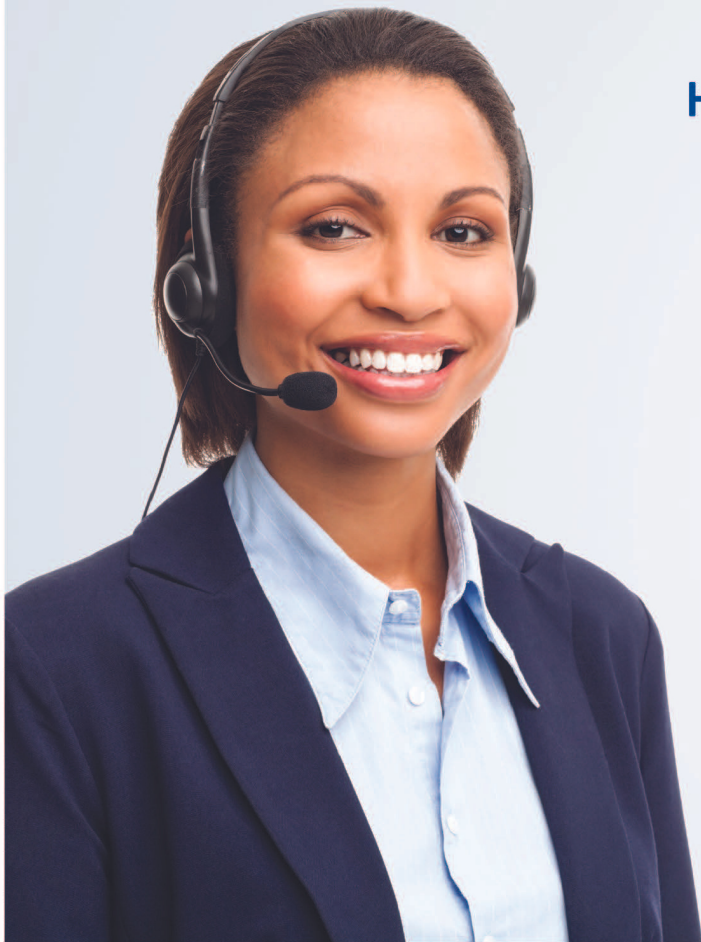


À venir le 1^{er} janvier 2022

Member & Family Assistance Program (MFAP)

We can help.

Free and confidential support for eligible members and their families.



HumanaCare's supports and services can assist in the following areas:

- Relationships and Couples
- Family and Parenting
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance Use
- Legal and Financial
- Grief and Bereavement
- Career Coaching
- Behavioural Management
- Diet and Nutrition
- Work-Related Stress
- Bullying and Harassment
- Crisis and Trauma



Coming January 1, 2022



Why are we changing from our current EAP?

The mental health needs of teachers are growing and becoming more complex. The demand for EAP counselling has increased steadily for many years, resulting in lengthy wait times, program limitations and inequitable access to important services. The change to HumanaCare means more timely access to counselling services for a greater range of issues in all areas of Manitoba.

How was all this decided?

MTS engaged an external consultant to conduct a review of our EAP in 2020-2021. The process included member and staff input to assess existing services, identify gaps, and consider a strategy for enhanced, sustainable, comprehensive counselling services. In September 2021, after careful consideration of the review findings, the Provincial Executive passed a unanimous motion to engage HumanaCare effective January 1, 2022.

Is HumanaCare the same as EAP?

HumanaCare will provide counselling services—like our EAP did—and a lot more. Under HumanaCare, we're extending coverage to our members' eligible family members, and we've increased the range of services offered to include marriage and family therapy, and counselling in areas such as substance abuse, bereavement, stress management, finances, and more.

I'm seeing an MTS EAP counsellor right now. What happens to me?

Anyone who is currently in sessions with our counsellors will be able to complete the sessions available to them until March 31, 2022, at the latest. We encourage you to speak with your counsellor about your therapy plan.

What are the current EAP staff going to do next?

MTS has long recognized that educators have unique needs that require a comprehensive suite of services. Our current EAP staff will use their experience, expertise, and skills in working with our members to develop new services including mental health education programs, mental health advocacy, and research partnerships, as well as direct services to members and locals. We'll have more detail for you by the end of the school year.

So MTS wasn't dissatisfied with the EAP counsellors' service?

Not at all. Our EAP counsellors are highly skilled professionals who provided a vital service to MTS members for many years—and we still need them. They remain an essential part of the Society's focus on teacher mental health, shaping programming and initiatives that will become an integral part of our ongoing professional services to members. The challenge for the EAP was the ever-growing demand for services, lengthy wait times, and inequitable access to service for members outside of Winnipeg and Brandon. We knew change was needed in order to provide timely, comprehensive support to all MTS members. And we wanted to offer services to our members' families, too.

Who are considered "eligible" family members?

Eligible family members include an MTS member's spouse/partner and dependants under the age of 21 who reside in the home. Eligibility is also extended to dependants in the home who are between the ages of 21-25 and enrolled in post secondary schools, as well as disabled dependants of any age.

How do I register myself and my family?

There is no need to register. In mid-December MTS will distribute an access code which will identify you and your family as eligible for services starting January 1. Watch your email and the MTS website for more information. Posters will be distributed to all schools, as well.

Do I have to keep the access code?

No. You only use the access code once, to create your personal, private profile with HumanaCare. Once that's done you can start booking services right away.

Do my eligible family members need their own access code?

No. All MTS members and those eligible use the same access code. The code connects to a HumanaCare landing page where each of you will set up your own separate profile.

Can more than one family member access HumanaCare at the same time?

Yes.

Can I contact HumanaCare now and get on a wait list or set up an appointment for January?

No. MTS members are not covered by HumanaCare until January 1, 2022. At that time, you and/or family members can contact HumanaCare any time, day or night, to request services. From there you will be connected with a counsellor. The best part: no wait list.

If I'm using my extended health benefits to see a counsellor right now, do I have to switch to HumanaCare?

Not at all. Your extended health benefits are separate and additional benefits for you use as you see fit. You can set up a profile with HumanaCare at any time.

January 1, 2022, is a holiday. Will I really be able to contact them that day?

Absolutely.

How many sessions will I have?

All counselling assistance programs—including our current EAP and HumanaCare—are intended to address emergent, short term counselling needs. Psychiatric or long-term counselling is covered under our members' extended health care plans.

Is this covered through my union dues?

It is.

Can I see a counsellor in person?

HumanaCare offers in-person counselling as well as phone, virtual and online/text services, all in multiple languages. However, not all provider specialties will be available in-person.

Will I be accommodated if I have a preference for counsellor, i.e. BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+, female identifying, etc.

Yes, you should ask for your preference at the time of your intake. Keep in mind, though, that your preference for counsellor may not be available in your community, or in person. However, HumanaCare has a vast network of counsellors and will work to meet your needs.

Where do I see these counsellors? Is there a HumanaCare office?

HumanaCare contracts with counsellors in communities throughout Manitoba. Services may be provided on the phone, through video conferencing, or in person at the counsellor's own office.

How many sessions will I have with a counsellor? Is there any discretion from the counsellor?

Members and their eligible family are provided with a clinically appropriate number of sessions (within the short-term nature of the MFAP). The average is from four to eight sessions, however some people may require more support and some less depending on their individual circumstances.

What if I see a counsellor, and then a year from now need counselling again. Can I see the same person?

Yes, this is an option. As long as the counsellor is still in HumanaCare's network and has maintained their credentials, individuals can be set up with the same counsellor where requested.

24/7 intake, including holidays? We are live January 1 – does that mean members will have someone answer the phone that day?

Correct. Intake is 24/7 live answer, 365 days a year. It's important to note that since phones are answered 24/7 it is recommended that if anyone is dealing with an urgent matter/crisis to call in and not use the mobile app or website to initiate support. While HumanaCare is quick to respond to inquiries via the app or web, they are not as immediate as a call in.

What if I miss the email with the access code?

No worries. In addition to the information provided by email in mid-December (watch for it in the MTS member newsletter, The Sub) you'll find information posted on the MTS website and at your school, too. Your local association will have the information as well. Remember, though, that **HumanaCare services are only available starting January 1, 2022**, and the access code will be provided in mid-December.

I can't get into EAP before January 1 and I need counselling services now. What do I do?

MTS members can access their extended health benefits for counselling services before HumanaCare goes live on January 1.

Extended health providers, such as Blue Cross, cover the following: clinical psychologist, social worker, psychotherapist, clinical counsellor and marriage/family therapist. Members can access up to \$850 per calendar year for these services, so those benefits will be renewed and can continue into the new year. Alternatively, members can switch to HumanaCare in January.

In addition, click the following links to search for counsellors/psychologists near you.

[The Psychological Association of Manitoba \(cpmb.ca\)](http://cpmb.ca)

[Find a Canadian Certified Counsellor \(CCC\) or CCC-Supervisor \(CCC-S\) – Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association \(ccpa-accp.ca\)](#) Just select Manitoba, city of choice, and hit search.

The Province of Manitoba also offers some services free of charge at [Province of Manitoba | Be Well](#)

PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND UPDATE

Vice President Professional Development- Jay McGurran



REIMBURSEMENTS FOR APPROVED PPDF APPLICATIONS

Despite out-of-town professional developments remaining on hold for a bit longer and a general lack of in-town professional development, requests for funding to PPDF are at an all time high. In Term 1 alone (September to December), PPDF has reviewed an incredible 474 applications! With each application comes a request for reimbursement. Upon completion of your event, you will receive an email with detailed instruction on how to access your reimbursement. Below are a few reminders to ensure that your request does not get delayed.

1. Ensure to send all forms and receipts as attachments. I do not have access to LRSD SharePoint through my LRTA profile.
2. Complete the online PD Report Form before you send your reimbursement request.
3. If your registration was paid in foreign currency, include proof of currency conversion (redacted bank or credit card statement).
4. Reimbursements will not be processed if any documentation is missing or incorrect.

Please allow 2 to 3 weeks to process the reimbursement and receive your cheque. Depending on the volume of reimbursements to distribute, the cheque will either be dropped off at your school or mailed to the address provided on the PD Reimbursement Form.

MTS PD DAY REQUESTS

Due to the overwhelming demand, PPDF will accept applications for MTS PD Day reimbursements until December 31st, 2021. The process for application is as follows;

1. Submit a request through the PPDF system.
2. The General Committee will review the request.
3. If approved, the member will receive confirmation through the PPDF system.
4. The member will receive an email from pdlrta@shaw.ca with instructions on submitting documentation for reimbursement.



PPDF TERM OPENING DATES

PPDF Term Opening Dates

Term 1 (Sep. 7, 2021 to Dec. 31, 2021)	Now Open
Term 2 (Jan. 1, 2022 to Feb. 28, 2022)	Now Open
Term 3 (March 1, 2022 to April 30, 2022)	Now Open
Term 4 (May 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022)	Opens January 15 th , 2022 at 8:00am
Term 5 (July 1, 2022 to August 31, 2022)	Opens February 15 th , 2022 at 8:00am

Click [here](#) to access the PPDF Guidelines for more details about how the PPDF can support your autonomous professional development needs. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at pdlrta@shaw.ca or 204-929-5782, and please stay connected with your Council Rep for regular updates.



LRTA Calendar 2021-2022

December

Wednesday, 1st LRTA Executive Meeting
Wednesday, 15th LRTA Council Meeting
Thursday, 23rd through
Wednesday, Jan. 5th Winter Break

January

Wednesday, 12th LRTA Executive Meeting
Wednesday, 19th LRTA Council Meeting

February

Wednesday, 2nd LRTA Executive Meeting
Wednesday, 16th LRTA Council Meeting

March

Wednesday, 2nd LRTA Executive Meeting
Wednesday, 16th LRTA Council Meeting
Monday, 28th through
Friday, April 1st Spring Break

April

Wednesday, 6th LRTA Executive Meeting
Wednesday, 13th LRTA Council Meeting
Thursday, 14th Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar
Wednesday, 20th LRTA Annual General Assembly

May

Wednesday, 4th LRTA Executive Meeting
Thursday, 12th LRTA Appreciation Dinner
Wednesday, 18th LRTA Council Meeting
Wednesday, 18th MTS AGM Binder Meeting
Wednesday, 25th through
Saturday, 28th MTS AGM

June

Wednesday, 1st LRTA Executive Meeting
Wednesday, 15th LRTA Council Meeting
Thursday, 16th LRTA Retirement Reception

Reminder: If you have recently changed your name, please contact the LRTA office at 204-929-5782 or seclrta@shaw.ca and have your file updated.

CONTACT US

LRTA Office
204-929-5782

President
Marcela Cabezas
preslrta@shaw.ca

Collective Bargaining
Scott Wood
cbllrta@shaw.ca

Professional Development
Jay McGurran
pdlrta@shaw.ca

All matters will be dealt with in confidence.

Call MTS at 204-888-7961 to request assistance from a Staff Officer

@preslrta



MTS SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SPACE

MTS will be ordering a print run of the new Safe and Inclusive Space posters which will be printed in 11x17 format.

The poster is a visual confirmation to the visitors in your workspace that they have entered a safe and inclusive space.

Rather than order a mass quantity, we are asking each member who would like one to place their own order by using the link below. By ordering and displaying this poster, you are advertising that you support the principles advertised on it. If you are displaying the poster in a shared workspace, please ensure that all MTS members using the space agree to support these principles.

The link to the order form is as follows:
<https://tinyurl.com/2b6cm9rt>

Ensure your order is placed prior to 4PM on Monday, November 29th. Please feel free to contact [Marcela Cabezas](#) should you have any questions.

