



SMA Retention Fund – Program Details

1. Description

The SMA Retention Fund is a program designed to encourage the long term retention of physicians in Saskatchewan. Physicians who practice in Saskatchewan for a defined period of time will earn annual entitlements that will be paid to them at designated intervals.

2. Eligible Physicians

In order to accumulate benefits, a physician must:

1. Hold licensure with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan,
2. Reside in Saskatchewan, and
3. Provide insured clinical services in Saskatchewan that meet the thresholds for eligibility (see below) or be in a medical administrative position approved by the Retention Fund Board.

3. Benefit Rates

Benefit rates for the 2001-2009 period are as follows:

| Years of Practice in Saskatchewan | Benefit – Full Time | Benefit-Part Time |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 0 to 9 years | \$3,500 per year | \$1,750 per year |
| 10 to 19 years | \$5,250 per year | \$2,625 per year |
| 20 plus years | \$7,000 per year | \$3,500 per year |

Full time benefits apply when:

- The Physician has an employment or other alternate remuneration arrangement during the fiscal year and has provided an average of at least 20 hours service or more per working week; or
- The Physician is engaged as a fee-for-service physician during the fiscal year and received a minimum of \$40,000 in gross revenues from the practice of medicine (\$60,000 starting in 2006)

Part time benefits apply when:

- The Physician has an employment or other alternate remuneration arrangement during the fiscal year and provides an average of at least 10 but less than 20 hours service per working week; or
- The Physician is engaged as a fee-for-service physician during the fiscal year and received a minimum of \$10,000 in gross revenues from the practice of medicine (\$30,000 starting in 2006); or
- The Physician has declared himself/herself to be in part-time practice.

4. Allowable Breaks in Service

Physicians will be allowed the following breaks in service without losing accumulated benefits:

Unrestricted One Year (Maximum) Leave - such as a sabbatical, in a location other than Saskatchewan. Physicians have the ability to practice medicine during the term of their leave without any type of restriction on their income or hours of work.

Medical Education Leave – up to a five-year leave to pursue medical education/residency either for self or spouse.

Special Circumstance Leave – subject to the approval of the Retention Fund Board, for a period of up to five consecutive years. Examples could include:

- Maternity/Paternity leave
- Providing care for a terminally ill spouse/family member
- Personal disability or illness of the physician
- Public Service/Politics
- Non medical education leave (e.g. to pursue an MBA)

For any of the scenarios listed above, physicians will not accumulate further benefits while away from practice, nor will the time spent away be counted as years of service.

5. Forfeiture of Benefits and Repatriation

Physicians who exceed the time frames under “allowable breaks in service” will automatically forfeit all benefits accrued under the plan.

Physicians who subsequently repatriate to Saskatchewan after losing all accumulated benefits would still receive credit for prior years of service in the determination of their benefit accumulation rate (e.g. if a physician with 20 years of service practices elsewhere for more than one year, he would lose all accumulated amounts. If he returned, he would start earning entitlements at the 20+ years of service rate.)

6. Vesting

Vesting refers to physicians' eligibility to receive their accumulated benefits. Most physicians' accumulated entitlements will first vest on April 1, 2011. For those who started practice after 2001, entitlements will vest on the day after they provide 10 years of service.

After the first vesting date, a physician would be eligible to receive subsequent accumulations at the end of each five year period.

7. Payment of Benefits

There are four circumstances where a Physician would be eligible for payout under the Fund:

1. At Vesting Time
2. Upon Permanent Disability
3. Upon Retirement
4. Upon Death

Payout at Vesting Time

Physicians will be paid their vested entitlements in a lump sum as soon as reasonably possible after the physician vesting date.

Payout upon Permanent Disability

Permanently disabled physicians are those individuals who are not engaged in the practice of medicine as a direct result of disabilities following a six month period of medical practice inactivity. Permanent or total disability means the inability of the physician, due to injury or sickness, to perform the duties of his/her regular occupation.

Permanently disabled physicians will be paid their accumulated entitlements in a lump sum as soon as reasonably possible following the determination of permanent disability.

Payout Upon Retirement

A Physician is deemed retired if he/she declares retirement, and either discontinues practicing medicine/medical administrative work, or practices at an activity level less than the part-time entitlement threshold.

Physicians who declare retirement and discontinue licensure in Saskatchewan or elsewhere will be eligible to receive their accumulated benefit following a six-month waiting period.

Physicians who declare retirement but continue to hold a medical licence will be subject to a waiting period sufficient to verify their professional incomes. Physicians will be responsible to provide information sufficient to verify their incomes (e.g. income tax returns).

A Physician who has declared retirement is not permitted to re-enter the plan at a later date.

Only physicians with 10 or more years of service in Saskatchewan will be considered for retirement payouts.

A Physician must provide a sworn statement declaration of retirement to the Plan Administrator of the Fund.

Payout Upon Death

A Physician's estate will be eligible for immediate payout of accumulated benefits upon the death of the Physician.

The Physician's estate will be required to provide the Plan Administrator notification in writing of the date of death and a copy of the Wills Probate.

Payment will be made to the beneficiary or the executor of the estate, as directed by the physician's Wills Probate.

8. Appeals

An appeal mechanism will be introduced to provide physicians with recourse if they disagree with any decision made by the SMA/Fund Administrator.