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Fall Into Our Fall Wellness Fair

Circle the date in your calendars for Saturday, September 27th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for our next Wellness Fair. We're back again at the IBEW Local 353 South Union Hall. Will you be there?

Our wellness fair is a one stop shop for all your wellness needs and interests, whether they are physical, mental, or financial. Discover information that is tailored to you, our IBEW Local 353 members. Ask questions and get guidance on a wide variety of topics; your pension and benefit plans, your group RRSP, diabetes awareness, financial wellness and more! We will be giving out prizes and there will be snacks to help keep you energized. Come out and meet a variety of guest vendors who help to shape your wellness journey.

Register early to attend short workshops on financial and physical wellness topics. You can also book an in-person retirement planning session. Here are the presentations you can sign up for:

- Pre-Retirement Seminar at **8:30 a.m.** - Domenic Martino - Filling up quickly!
- Protect Your Money at **10:00 a.m.** - Chris Allum
- Diabetes Awareness at **10:30 a.m.** - Dr. Serena Natale
- Estate Planning at **11:30 a.m.** - Justin Poirier

To secure your spot for a specific presentation, email us at members@teibas.com and let us know which presentation you would like to sign up for. We hope to see you there!

Save the date!



TEIBAS Member Webinars & Seminars

Pension & Benefits Webinar
Wed. Sept. 24 @ 7:00 p.m.

Pre-Retirement Webinar
Thurs. Sept. 25 @ 7:00 p.m.

Pension & Benefits Webinar
Wed. Oct. 29 @ 7:00 p.m.

Pre-Retirement Webinar
Thurs. Oct. 30 @ 7:00 p.m.

TEIBAS Wellness Fair

Sat. Sept. 27 from 9:00 a.m.
to 1:00 p.m. In person at the
IBEW Local 353 Union Hall

1377 Lawrence Ave East,
Toronto ON, M3A 3P8

Email members@teibas.com to
register for any of the above
webinars.

Benefits Corner - How to navigate your IBEW Local 353 Pension and Benefit Plans

When it comes to mental, physical or financial health it takes work to build a healthy lifestyle. But you don't have to do it alone. To navigate your IBEW Local 353 Pension & Benefit plans you can start with visiting our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@myteibas>. This will help you get on the road with your IBEW Local 353 Benefit Plan, one of the most comprehensive benefit plans in the Ontario construction industry. This Plan covers you, your eligible spouse and your eligible dependants. With the IBEW Local 353 Benefit Plans, you're in the driver's seat — and your [member roadmap](#) is there to help you navigate the Plans from today all the way through to retirement!

Watch the [member roadmap](#) video here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAJpMOIJQUw/> to get an overview of the valuable benefits available to you and your eligible dependants. You can also download a copy of the member roadmap on [teibas.com here](#) to get a visual overview of the benefits available to you. Then watch our Benefits at a Glance video playlist [here](#) on our YouTube channel, [@myteibas](#) to get a refresher on your Benefit Plan and the help that is at your fingertips. Remember, you can always

refer to your IBEW Local 353 Benefit Plan booklet at [teibas.com](#) or [myteibas.com](#). Still want to learn more? Sign-up for an upcoming webinar by emailing members@teibas.com or signing up at <https://teibas.com/member-webinars/>.

Here at TEIBAS we like to say that it's never too early to plan for your retirement. Get started by watching the retirement and pension playlist on our YouTube channel which plays our Pension Plan video and our It's Never Too Early to Plan for Retirement video [here](#). To find out the latest about your Pension and Benefit Plans remember to subscribe to our channel so you'll be notified when new videos are added at <https://www.youtube.com/@myteibas/>.

We also launched a [Retirement Planning Guide](#) to help you plan for your retirement and a [Retirement Planning Checklist](#) to help you get started. You can access these and more in the member library at [teibas.com](#). Questions? We're here to help! Reach out to our member services team and sign up for a Pre-Retirement webinar by emailing members@teibas.com. TEIBAS staff are right beside you, helping you to plan for your future. And remember we're here to help.



Keeping up with TEIBAS: Remember that as your life changes you'll want to think about who you've named as your beneficiaries and update them if you need to. You can view your named beneficiaries at [myteibas.com](#), and find change forms on [teibas.com](#) or [myteibas.com](#) if you need to update them.



Follow us on YouTube

Scan the QR Code here and subscribe to our YouTube channel to keep up with TEIBAS and your Pension and benefit plans.



Specialty Prescription Drugs — What you need to know

The Trustees are committed to effectively managing our drug plan while ensuring members and their families receive the care they need. Since 2005, the IBEW Local 353 Benefits Plan has required Pre-Approval (also known as Prior Authorization or PA) for many specialty prescription drugs before they can be paid for under the Plan. PA determines if a medication can be reimbursed under the plan given the complexity of medical conditions treated using specialty drugs, and the need to ensure a consistent and transparent set of clinical criteria across the 200 different diagnoses that are seen through the PA process every year.

Currently the Plan uses the FACET Prior Authorization Program (FACET) to assess PA requests for claim approval and reimbursement. FACET is an independent, third-party program that helps to ensure that high-cost medications are used appropriately, safely, and in accordance with the latest clinical evidence from Health Canada and Canada's Drug Agency. PA helps protect plan members by ensuring that treatment decisions are based on sound medical evidence

and it also protects the long-term sustainability of the Benefits Plan. **A PA medication requires your doctor to complete a PA form and submit it directly to FACET for review.**

It's important to note that the PA by FACET is not questioning an underlying diagnosis from a doctor. The PA process simply assesses what the Plan will reimburse. In cases where the FACET PA indicates a medication can't be reimbursed by the Plan, a detailed explanation citing the most up-to-date clinical evidence is sent to both the member and their prescribing doctor.

Approvals under FACET are valid for a maximum of one year before the PA request needs to be renewed. A common reason for this is that many complex, specialty therapies are biologically based and their impact can lessen over time as the body develops antibodies to the medication. Sometimes a member may need to move to another specialty therapy if during the renewal process it is clear the medication is losing its effectiveness.

Understanding Drug Types: What's the Difference Between Biologics, Biosimilars, and Generics?

You may have heard terms like biologics, biosimilars, or generics used when talking about prescription medications. These terms refer to different types of drugs, and they can affect how our Benefit Plan covers them. Here's a simple breakdown:

Generic Drugs: Chemically Identical, Lower Cost

Generic drugs are copies of brand-name medications and contain the same active ingredients, work the same way in the body, and are held to the same quality and safety standards as brand-name drugs. Generic drugs are less expensive than the brand name drug, and the Benefit Plan will usually only cover the cost of the lowest-priced equivalent generic, unless your doctor clearly indicates that the brand-name version is medically necessary (for example by writing "no substitution" on your prescription). Most generic drugs don't require prior authorization (PA). However, some generic medications, especially those used for rare or complex conditions, are considered specialty drugs due to their high cost. If the drug requires a PA your doctor or pharmacist will let you know.

Biologics: Complex, Specialized Medications

Biologic drugs are made from living cells, not chemicals. They are used to treat complex conditions such as autoimmune diseases or cancer. Because of their complexity, biologics are often more expensive and may have prior authorization (PA) requirements to make sure they are being used safely and appropriately.

Biosimilars: Safe, Effective Alternatives to Biologics

Biosimilars are **near-identical versions** of biologic drugs whose patents have expired. They are not generic copies (since biologics are too complex to replicate exactly), but they are highly similar in terms of safety, quality, and effectiveness. Health Canada reviews biosimilars using the same strict standards as all prescription drugs. In many cases biosimilars cost up to 50% less than their originator biologics. Given their clinical complexity and relatively high cost, most biosimilars, whether for new users or those switching from an originator biologic, require a prior

authorization (PA) application. This helps ensure the medication is used appropriately and that plan resources are managed responsibly. Most biosimilar drugs are manufactured by brand name drug companies. **They are not considered generic drugs.**

Plan Policy: Switching to Biosimilars

To help keep the IBEW Local 353 Benefits Plan affordable and sustainable for all members the Trustees adopted a biosimilar transition policy which means that if a member of the Plan is taking a biologic drug and a biosimilar becomes available, they may be required to switch to the biosimilar to maintain coverage. This approach aligns with what every provincial plan and most private plans are doing across Canada, including the Ontario Drug Program. If that happens and you believe the biosimilar is not suitable, talk to your doctor. They can complete and submit

a form to the FACET program explaining why the biosimilar cannot be tolerated.

Important: the “no substitution” rule that applies to generics does not apply to biosimilars. Approval through the FACET program is required for continued coverage of the originator biologic.

Remember: Specialty prescription drugs PA applications should not be sent to Canada Life.

All PA requests need to be sent to the FACET Program directly. Email the completed form to claims@facetprogram.ca or fax to 1-844-446-1575. You can also call them at 1-844-492-9105.

You can learn more by visiting <https://facetprogram.ca>.



TEIBAS' Members App Guide

Scan the following QR Codes to download the apps for:



B E N E F I T S I N F O R M A T I O N S T A T I O N

Member Research Survey — Have Your Say!

The Trustees of the IBEW Local 353 Health & Welfare Plan have hired Stratcom to assist in conducting a benefit survey for the members of the IBEW Local 353. Members can expect to receive an invitation to participate from the email address 'surveys@stratresearch.ca' containing a secure link to the survey.

You'll have until September 12th to complete the Member Research Survey. The goal of the survey is to better understand members' thoughts and attitudes towards the benefits offered, to help ensure that the benefit plan remains sustainable and meets you and your family's needs. It's not intended to imply any specific changes will be made to the benefit plan, and the results are not binding on the Board of Trustees.

It's also an opportunity for you to share any benefit or pension concerns or questions you have. Have your voice heard by completing this short but informative survey and let us know how we can serve you better. Once we receive the results, we will post them on myteibas.com. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and suggestions.



TEIBAS TIP — Back to School Reminder

The leaves are starting to turn colour, the weather is getting cooler, and we all know what that means — your dependants are gearing up to go back to school!

A reminder that your student dependant(s) who is/are between the ages of 21 and 25 may qualify for coverage if studying full-time at a post-secondary institution.

To apply for, or continue coverage for your eligible dependant student(s), complete the Declaration of Post-Secondary Attendance Form on teibas.com or myteibas.com or provide TEIBAS with an official proof of enrolment from the post-secondary institution they are attending.

Proof for the student you are applying to continue coverage for, needs to be submitted to TEIBAS at the beginning of each semester or school year. If anything changes, make sure you notify us.



Project Horizon Update

Here at TEIBAS we're always looking towards the future and seeing what we can do to serve our members better. As part of our vision to be the ideal model of an efficient and effective pension and benefit administration service within the multi-employer construction sector, we are providing an update on Project Horizon.

In 2023, we launched a multi-year IT project to consolidate and modernize our pension and benefit systems, including development of new member, employer and union portals. **The new member portal** will be accessed through myteibas.com.

Project Horizon will modernize the way we deliver our services to our members making us more efficient and our services more comprehensive.

Project Horizon has a target date of March 1, 2026 for go-live here at TEIBAS, with staggered launch dates for the member, employer and union portals between March and September of 2026.

This means a faster and easier to navigate system is coming your way! We will continue to give you updates as we get closer to the launch dates.



IBEW Local 353 Trust Funds Board of Trustees

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This bulletin was prepared on behalf of the Trustees of the IBEW Local 353 Trust Funds. It provides summary information about the IBEW Local 353 Health and Welfare Plan, the Supplementary Unemployment Benefit (SUB) and the IBEW Local 353 Pension Plan (registration number 0598235) in plain language. This publication is not intended to provide advice. If there is any discrepancy between this document and the legal documents that govern the plans, the legal documents will apply. The Trustees expect to maintain these benefit plans indefinitely. However, they reserve the right to change or cancel any or all benefits under the Health and Welfare Plan, the Pension Plan, and the SUB Plan for active and retired members, and their survivors and dependants.



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