

**General Employees' Master Agreement (GEMA)**  
**March 25, 2023 – March 19, 2027**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**1. What is the new retention (maximum) step?**

Effective October 7, 2023, a new 2.5% maximum step that has been added to the pay scales of all classifications under GEMA (with the exception of those in the Corrections Component).

For all classifications in the Corrections Component, a new 3.25% has been added to applicable pay scales, effective October 7, 2023.

**2. How does the retention (maximum) step benefit me?**

A new maximum step provides greater earning potential for all employees since an additional step has been added to each of the GEMA pay scales.

**3. Who qualifies for the one-time only automatic step progression?**

All employees actively employed on October 7, 2023, and covered under GEMA, except for those at the 20-year Long Service Step (LSS).

**4. What does a one-time only automatic step progression mean?**

It is a one-time only automatic progression to the next available (non-LSS) step in the pay scale(s) for all eligible employees on October 7, 2023. An employee's anniversary date will not change as a result.

**Examples:**

**#1: An Employee's Anniversary date is BEFORE October 7, 2023:**

- Employee is a Clerk 3 (CL3) at step 5 of the pay scale, with a May 1, 2023, anniversary date.
- If eligible for a Merit Increase under Article 16, an Employee will receive their May 1, 2023 merit Increase to step 6 of the CL3 pay scale.
- On October 7, 2023, a new maximum step (step 7) will be added to the CL3 pay scale.
- Regardless of Merit Increase eligibility under Article 16, employee will be automatically advanced to the new maximum step (step 7) of the CL3 pay scale.

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**#2: An Employee's Anniversary date is AFTER October 7, 2023:**

- Employee is a CL3 at step 5 of the pay scale, with a December 1, 2023, anniversary date.
- On October 7, 2023, a new maximum step (step 7) will be added to the CL3 pay scale.
- Employee will automatically advance to step 6 of the CL3 pay scale on October 7, 2023.
- Upon the employee's anniversary date of December 1, 2023, if eligible for a Merit Increase under Article 16, they will advance to the new maximum step (step 7) of the CL3 pay scale.

These changes will be paid out retroactively.

**5. What if I am on a leave of absence predating October 7, 2023? When will I receive the automatic step progression?**

When you return to active service from your leave, your eligibility will be reviewed.

**6. I am at the 20-year Long Service Step (LSS20). Will the new maximum step affect my salary?**

Those at the LSS20 will receive an adjustment in salary. A 2% differential will be maintained between the new maximum step in the pay scale and the LSS20, effective October 7, 2023.

Examples:

**#1: Clerk 3 (CL3) employee at step 6 in the pay scale with a May 1, 2023, anniversary date.**

- If eligible for the LSS20 upon their anniversary date of May 1, 2023, the employee will be placed at the LSS20 step of the CL3 pay scale.
- On October 7, 2023, a new maximum step (step 7) will be added to the CL3 pay scale.
- Employee will continue to receive their LSS20 pay, however, they will receive the above-mentioned adjustment to their salary to maintain a

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2% differential between the new maximum step (step 7) and their LSS20 pay.

**#2: CL3 employee at step 6 in the pay scale with a December 1, 2023, anniversary date.**

- On October 7, 2023, a new maximum step (step 7) will be added to the CL3 pay scale.
- Employee will automatically progress to the new maximum step (step 7) of the CL3 pay scale on October 7, 2023.
- Then on their December 1, 2023, anniversary date, if eligible for a Merit Increase under Article 16 they will increase to the LSS20 on the CL3 pay scale. They will not have to be at the maximum step of their pay range (step 7) for a minimum of twelve (12) consecutive months.

**7. What is the 25-year Long Service Step?**

Effective March 23, 2024, employees who have twenty-five (25) or more years of calendar service and have been at the 20-year long service step for a minimum of 12 consecutive months and meet eligibility for a Merit Increase under Article 16 and Appendix "C" – Part Time Employees, Section 5:12 – Merit Increases for Other Departmental Employees, will be eligible for the 25-year Long Service Step.

A detailed guide to the 25-year Long Service Step is available by clicking on this [link](#).

**8. Is the National Truth and Reconciliation Day now a yearly holiday?**

Yes. The Public Service will observe the National Truth and Reconciliation Day annually (Orange Shirt Day) on September 30.

**9. Am I now eligible to receive time-off for appointments and treatments for mental health issues?**

Effective March 9, 2024, under Article 28 of the GEMA: you can receive time-off for examinations or treatments by Psychiatrists, Psychologists and Registered Clinical Social Workers. The time-off will be charged against your accumulated sick leave credits and is subject to the requirements of Article 28.

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**10. Do I now have a right for union representation if I require accommodation from the Employer?**

Accommodation for protected characteristics under the Human Rights Code, is a tripartite (three party) process which involves the Employer, the employee and where applicable the Union. Effective March 9, 2024, Article 65 of the GEMA ensures that you will be advised by the Employer of your right to have a union representative present during any related discussions, with the employer.

For questions related to **Recognition Pay** and **Personal Wellness Leave** please visit the Core Public Service Collective Bargaining site by clicking on this [link](#).

**Changes to Benefits (Vision, Drug and Dental)**

**11. When will the annual benefit maximum increase for the Drug plan for full-time employees take effect?**

The increase will be effective April 1, 2023.

Implementation is currently underway by Blue Cross on all benefits changes.

**12. What changes were made to the Drug plan?**

As part of the recently negotiated settlement, changes were made to the Drug plan.

There will be an increase from \$800.00 to \$900.00 for FT (full-time) employees and \$400.00 to \$540.00 for PT (part-time) employees.

Full-time employees will be able to retroactively claim \$100 from Blue Cross for expenses that were not previously eligible.

**13. Are part-time employees able to claim the Drug plan increase of \$140?**

No. Part-time employees can retroactively claim \$50 only.

The increase to 60% of the annual maximum for part-time employees is effective

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the first day of the bi-weekly pay period following the date of signing (March 9, 2024).

**14. Who is eligible for this retroactive increase in the annual entitlement under the Drug plan?**

Anyone who has submitted drug claims in excess of \$800 FT and \$400 PT during the 2023 calendar year.

Anyone who exceeded their maximum drug claim amount and applied for the balance to be taken out of their Health Spending Account (HSA) credits for 2023.

**15. What do I need to do to receive reimbursement?**

Blue Cross will re-evaluate all eligible and previously submitted claims on file and eligible employees will receive a deposit of funds up to \$100 in their bank account (or by cheque if they are not set up with direct deposit).

Additional communication will be forthcoming about the implementation timelines.

**16. When do the changes to Dental, Vision and HSA plans take effect?**

The changes are effective March 9, 2024.

Additional communication will be forthcoming about the implementation timelines.

**17. What if I have additional questions or concerns about the Drug plan increases or other increases to health benefits (Dental, Vision)?**

You can contact Manitoba Blue Cross directly by telephone: 204.775.0151 or 1.888.596.1032 (toll free).

The Call Centre is open Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. (closed weekends).

You can also find additional information on the Manitoba Blue Cross website: [Manitoba Blue Cross](#)