

tions performed by physicians became general benefits under most schemes, and in a number of provinces refractions by optometrists as well. The optometric benefit is cost-shared when the beneficiary is eligible under the Canada Assistance Plan. Frames, lenses and fittings continue to be benefits of the provincial health benefit schemes in the western provinces. Certain restrictions typically govern the amount that will be paid for frames embellished for cosmetic purposes.

### Non-physician benefits

### 5.2.4

Provinces also operate programs that provide personal health service benefits beyond those of the federal-provincial cost-shared hospital and medical programs.

**Dental care.** Seven provinces provide some insured dental care. The Newfoundland dental plan covers children to 10 years of age. In Prince Edward Island, children born in 1965 or after are eligible, and in Nova Scotia, those born in 1967 or later. The Quebec program covers children up to 10 years of age and, for all residents, oral surgery services provided by dentists in a university establishment determined by regulations. Saskatchewan operates a dental plan for children born from 1967 to 1971, and provides coverage for all residents for referred orthodontic services for abnormalities and particularly for care of cleft palate. Alberta provides a comprehensive range of dental goods and services, without direct charge at time of service, to all households (head, spouse and dependents) with a member 65 years of age or over. British Columbia covers orthodontic care of cleft lip and/or palate for residents under 21 years of age, where the service arises from plastic repair by a medical practitioner.

**Prescribed drugs.** Eight provinces have insurance programs for prescribed drugs. The Nova Scotia program provides all residents 65 years of age and over with prescription and certain other drugs, and prescribed ostomy equipment. New Brunswick entitles its residents 65 years of age and over to obtain without charge medically necessary drugs listed in a formulary, and provides a special drug-benefit entitlement for patients with cystic fibrosis. Quebec residents who receive any amount of guaranteed monthly income supplement added to their old age security pension also obtain specified insured drugs at no direct cost at time of service. Ontario provides drug benefits to residents eligible for federal and provincial income supplements or family benefits and to residents of nursing homes and homes for special care; the benefits are for drugs on an approved list of therapeutic products that can be prescribed by dentists or medical practitioners. The Manitoba plan for all residents covers 80% of the cost of certain drugs in excess of \$50 a year per family. The \$50 deductible is waived for welfare recipients and for others entitled to drugs under any other program. Saskatchewan has a program for all residents that covers the material-cost of prescribed drugs, with the patient paying a nominal negotiated prescribing fee. The province also meets the full cost of prescribed drugs, to a limit of \$1,000 a year per patient, required by any resident with chronic end-stage kidney disease who is receiving kidney dialysis or transplant. Alberta makes available to all residents at a reduced premium the prescribed drugs and other benefits of its Blue Cross sponsored optional services program. All residents who are medically insured may purchase drugs for a co-insurance charge of 20%, after paying a deductible of \$15 (for the entire benefit package). The premium and the \$15 deductible are waived for persons aged 65 or over and their families. The British Columbia plan pays 50% of the cost of prescriptions in excess of \$3 for persons in the highest bracket of medicare-premium assistance, and for all persons 65 years and over (exempt from the \$3 charge). Most provinces also supply through health department auspices certain drugs that are important in the treatment of diseases with high drug-therapy costs, such as venereal disease, rheumatic fever, tuberculosis, or cystic fibrosis.

**Optical care.** Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia cover for all insured residents the cost of visual assessments