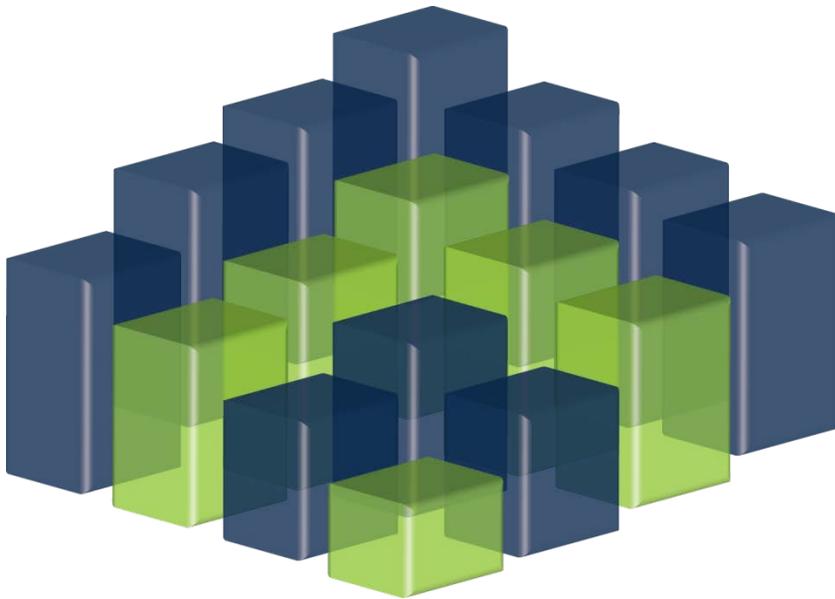




**Public Employees Pension Board
Special Report to Stakeholders
on PEPP Activities Related to COVID-19**



March 2020

A Special Report to Stakeholders

The Public Employees Benefits Agency (PEBA) has prepared this special report on behalf of the Public Employees Pension Board (the Board) to provide its stakeholders with a summary of activities undertaken by the Board with respect to the Public Employees Pension Plan (PEPP or the Plan) during the COVID-19 Flu Pandemic in 2020.

The report provides a summary of activities related to the pandemic which have been undertaken by the Plan as of March 31, 2020.



Special Report to Stakeholders on PEPP Activities Related to COVID-19

Public Employees Benefits Agency
Public Employees Pension Board

Letter from Vice-Chair, Darren Henderson
March 16, 2020

To PEPP's valued members,

As the global COVID-19 public health emergency continues to spread and create challenges for families and businesses worldwide, we wanted to share with you how PEPP is addressing many of the same challenges that our members may be facing.

PEPP represents over 65,000 members and 147 employers across Saskatchewan and our principal concern is now on prioritizing the most critical operations such as pension payroll and actively monitoring and managing plan investments. We are also focusing our resources so that we continue to remain available to serve our members and other stakeholders during this challenging time despite travel restrictions, social distancing and other challenges that impact our traditional ways of doing business.

The Public Employees Benefits Agency (PEBA), which PEPP contracts to administer your pension plan, has implemented the best practices of business continuity processes and they remain prepared to serve our valued members and other stakeholders during this time, however it's important you are aware that our methods of supporting members and employers are changing to reflect the new pandemic guidelines.

Effective immediately, we have postponed all scheduled member workshops and presentations to plan employers in order to follow the social distancing advice issued by the Province. We are also limiting engagement with our members, employers and other stakeholders and encouraging these activities to be conducted by phone or email where possible.

As this pandemic evolves, there may be additional changes to how we connect with members and I encourage you to check the PEPP website frequently for any updates. We will absolutely reschedule any planned large group meetings, workshops or presentations once the threat has passed. Members who have already registered for one of our many educational workshops, will be contacted by email and advised of any changes.



Special Report to Stakeholders on PEPP Activities Related to COVID-19

Public Employees Benefits Agency
Public Employees Pension Board

I would also encourage you to seek out information on www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus, the Government of Saskatchewan's dedicated webpage on COVID-19. It includes the most up-to-date information and guidance for all Saskatchewan residents.

Please do not hesitate to contact PEBA, if you have any questions about your pension or benefit plans. We recognize that this may be a prolonged effort, and wanted you to be fully aware of PEPP's commitment to continue serving you during this time.

Sincerely,
Darren Henderson, Vice Chair
Public Employees Pension Plan



Special Report to Stakeholders on PEPP Activities Related to COVID-19

Public Employees Benefits Agency
Public Employees Pension Board

PEPP Member Communication and Engagement Activities During the COVID-19 Flu Pandemic (as at March 31, 2020)

- A new [Covid-19 Update to PEPP Members](#) web page was created on the PEPP website to help members find answers on their pension plan during the pandemic (March 16, 2020).
- [Letter from Vice-Chair Darren Henderson](#) to members was posted on the PEPP website (March 16, 2020 – shown above).
- [Letter from PEBA Associate Deputy Minister, Dave Wild](#) was posted on the PEPP and PEBA websites (March 16, 2020).
- *All Your Path to Retirement Workshops (Learn, Build, Prepare, Enjoy)* have been postponed until further notice (March 16, 2020). A notice was placed on the PEPP website (March 16, 2020) and all registered members have been advised via email.
- All in-person member one-on-one meetings have been cancelled. Member meetings are now moved to phone calls only (March 18, 2020). Members with meetings scheduled have been contacted by phone.
- All PEPP employers received notification of the changes to member activities in relation to COVID-19 via email (March 17, 2020).
- Throughout this event, PEPP's employer support staff have been in regular contact with employers, answering their inquiries related to this event.
- Article [Market Volatility and Your Pension](#) was posted to the PEPP website (March 17, 2020)



Special Report to Stakeholders on PEPP Activities Related to COVID-19

Public Employees Benefits Agency
Public Employees Pension Board

- All PEPP members who have signed up to *E-Comm*, the Plan's paperless communication service, and provided a current email address received notification of the changes to member activities in relation to COVID-19 via email (March 18, 2020).
- To comply with the [State of Emergency](#) directive issued by the Government of Saskatchewan, PEBA staff began the transition to work from home (March 18, 2020). As of March 26th, 72 per cent of PEBA staff are serving Plan members and employers from home. A small percentage of staff remain in the office to receive mail and other member and employer documents which require manual processing. PEBA intends to continue transitioning as many of these staff to work from home as soon as possible.
- [Questions and Answers- Markets and PEPP Performance](#) were posted to the PEPP website (March 19, 2020). This document is updated frequently to respond to member feedback. Staff answering the phones use this document to ensure consistent messaging when responding to member inquiries.
- PEPP social media accounts continue to be updated with links to related information.
- PEPP member calls have increased substantially during the month of March and many are related to market volatility/COVID-19 and concern over pension balances. In comparison to the number of calls for the same period in 2019, calls during this period are up by 54 per cent in March 2020. (2107 calls in 2019 to 3255 calls in 2020).

Upcoming Member Communication and Engagement

The following is a summary of the activities planned to communicate with Plan members and employers in the coming months in order to support their needs related to the pandemic and market volatility.

- PEPP Member statements will be mailed to members in late April 2020 and will include additional helpful information related to Covid-19 including the Plan newsletter and helpful FAQs related to Covid-19 and the related market volatility.



Special Report to Stakeholders on PEPP Activities Related to COVID-19

Public Employees Benefits Agency
Public Employees Pension Board

- *Pension Perspectives*, the Plan newsletter, will include the article [Market Volatility and Your Pension](#) and will be mailed to members with their pension statements in April 2020.
- [Questions and Answers- Markets and PEPP Performance](#) on the PEPP website will be updated frequently in response to member feedback.
- Member consultation meetings will continue to be conducted by phone by PEBA Retirement Information Consultants. These staff members are Certified Financial Planner® professionals.
- PEBA is exploring ways to offer virtual workshops to members.
- General member inquiries will continue to be answered by phone and email by PEBA's Pension Information Officers and Retirement Information Consultants.
- Employer inquiries and meetings will continue to be conducted by phone and email by the employer support staff.
- An Employer Bulletin will be going out to all PEPP employers to provide information and reminders on the forms that are required by PEPP upon staff layoffs, leaves of absence etc.

INVESTMENT IMPACTS AND ACTIVITY

Financial markets have seen significant volatility during the Covid-19 crisis, primarily equity markets around the globe. Fixed income markets have also seen increased volatility, but to a lesser extent and with differing impacts in different sectors of the fixed income asset class. Alternative markets such as real estate are typically slower to see valuation impacts from events such as this.

PEBA continues to monitor and rebalance Plan assets as necessary to maintain the Plan's asset mix and liquidity.



Special Report to Stakeholders on PEPP Activities Related to COVID-19

Public Employees Benefits Agency
Public Employees Pension Board

Your Investment

We understand as a member you may have concerns regarding your investments during this time of market volatility.

The Public Employees Pension Board has an excellent and diverse portfolio of investment firms from around the globe to manage the Plan's investments. The Public Employees Benefits Agency (PEBA) as your Plan administrator has an experienced Investment Services team that is regularly talking to the PEPP fund managers all over the world, discussing the investments, opportunities, strategies and investment mandates. PEBA monitors PEPP's investments everyday on behalf of PEPP members.

We are actively monitoring global equity markets, and the historic nature of current world events. It's important to remember that historically, over the long term, markets typically perform well following downturns. All of PEPP's asset allocation funds are invested in a well-diversified portfolio of asset classes and investment managers. Diversification reduces the overall risk of your asset allocation fund because the positive performance of some investments off-sets the negative performance of others.

If you are uncertain or have questions about your pension fund, we encourage you to talk to one of our Retirement Information Consultants (RICs) who are Certified Financial Planner® professionals. They will be happy to review your investment portfolio with you and provide you with investment information that can help you make good informed decisions about your retirement planning. Simply call 306-787-3170 or, if you are outside of Regina, call us toll free at 1-877-275-7377 and ask to speak to one of our RICs. We look forward to answering your questions!

Legislation

The federal Covid-19 Economic Response plan received Royal Assent on March 25, 2020. This plan contains measures to lower minimum withdrawal amounts from retirement income funds by 25% in 2020 to address pressures that seniors may feel about liquidating their accounts. These rules also apply to individuals receiving variable benefits under a registered DC plan – which means Variable Pension Benefit (VPB) members within PEPP will have this available to them. We encourage VPB members who have questions about the new legislation to contact us.



Special Report to Stakeholders on PEPP Activities Related to COVID-19

Public Employees Benefits Agency
Public Employees Pension Board

Contact Information

Toll Free: 1-877-275-7377

General Inquiries: 1-306-787-5442

Retirement Information Consultants (Certified Financial Planner® professionals): 306-787-3170

Email: pepp@peba.gov.sk.ca

A reminder that you may be able to find what you're looking for by logging in to your **PEPP Access** online account. If you haven't signed up yet – this is a great time to do so! Find your current account balance, previous statements and much more! Create your secure account [here](#).

If you have questions about COVID-19, we encourage you to visit the page dedicated to this on the Government of Saskatchewan website at: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus>



Special Report to Stakeholders on PEPP Activities Related to COVID-19

Public Employees Benefits Agency

Public Employees Pension Board