

## Green Shield Canada Launches Digital Health Strategy to Support Mental Health

**TORONTO, ONTARIO (MAY 31, 2018)** – In a first for Canadian health benefits plans, digital, evidence-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) will be offered alongside traditional prescription drug plans and psychotherapy services. Approximately 1.5 million Green Shield Canada (GSC) plan members and their dependents will now be able to use their coverage for modern mental health services with immediate access and in a format most convenient to them.

GSC has been seeking ways to help chip away at some common barriers that prevent plan members from getting the mental health treatment they need, namely access, cost, and a lack of evidence-based, quality counselling options. GSC's annual health trends studies have demonstrated the tendency for physicians to prescribe antidepressants as first-line therapy for mild to moderate depression with very poor patient adherence scores in the aftermath. And when physicians do turn to community-based counselling options, there may be long wait lists and/or no assurance that quality, evidence-based care will be offered.

Starting this summer, we will be making available the BEACON program in GSC-administered benefits plans. BEACON provides a research-proven digital mental health therapy that uses the evidence-based CBT form of psychotherapy to treat many common mental health conditions, including depression and anxiety. It is less expensive than traditional face-to-face therapy sessions. That, in combination with a convenient digital delivery via a computer or mobile device, produces a solution that addresses access, cost, and quality.

"This partnership brings quality mental health care within reach of millions of Canadians who are GSC plan members," says Sam Duboc, CEO, BEACON. "Most people experiencing mental health concerns can't access the care they need, and now with this important evolution in employer-sponsored benefits plans, many will be able to overcome the affordability barrier to effective treatment through BEACON."

"Over the past few years, we have worked hard at GSC to bring new value-based health benefits into plans that had not evolved for decades," says David Willows, GSC's chief innovation and marketing officer. "Whether it is in-store coaching from dietitians and pharmacists, or this example of digital mental health treatment, we are following the published evidence to try to get plan members to use the best available services for the most prevalent health challenges in their population. And through those efforts, we believe plan sponsor investment in health benefits will be rewarded with longer-term population health outcomes."

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### For more information:

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Click here to listen to the **AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY INDIFFERENT** podcast episode which addresses the challenges in treating mental illness in Canada and how digital strategies can help.

Click here to read the edition of **THE INSIDE STORY®** about GSC's research and perspectives on mental health

### About Green Shield Canada

GSC is Canada's only national not-for-profit health and dental specialist, and their reason for being is the enhancement of the common good. GSC seeks innovative ways to improve access to better health for Canadians. From coast-to-coast, their service delivery includes drug, dental, extended health care, vision, hospital and travel benefits for groups and individuals, as well as administration services. Supported by cost containment strategies, advanced technology and exceptional customer service, they create customized programs for over two-million plan participants nationwide. **greenshield.ca**

### About BEACON

BEACON provides easy to access and affordable therapy that helps people feel and function better if they are experiencing mental health concerns, including symptoms related to depression, anxiety, panic and PTSD. Developed by CBT Associates, a leading Canadian provider of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), BEACON provides treatment through digitally delivered CBT with the one-on-one support of a dedicated therapist all along the way. BEACON is currently available across Canada. **mindbeacon.com**