

COBRA Continuation of Coverage

Introduction

You're getting this notice because you have coverage under a group health plan (the Plan). This notice has important information about your right to COBRA continuation coverage, which is a temporary extension of coverage under the Plan. This notice explains COBRA continuation coverage, when it may become available to you and your family, and what you need to do to protect your right to get it. When you become eligible for COBRA, you may also become eligible for other coverage options that may cost less than COBRA continuation coverage.

The right to COBRA continuation coverage was created by a federal law, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA). COBRA continuation coverage can become available to you and other members of your family when group health coverage would otherwise end. For more information about your rights and obligations under the Plan and under federal law, you should review the Plan's Summary Plan Description or contact the Plan Administrator.

You may have other options available to you when you lose group health coverage. For example, you may be eligible to buy an individual plan through the Health Insurance Marketplace. By enrolling in coverage through the Marketplace, you may qualify for lower costs on your monthly premiums and lower out-of-pocket costs. Additionally, you may qualify for a 30-day special enrollment period for another group health plan for which you are eligible (such as a spouse's plan), even if that plan generally doesn't accept late enrollees.

What is COBRA continuation coverage?

COBRA continuation coverage is a continuation of Plan coverage when it would otherwise end because of a life event. This is also called a "qualifying event." Specific qualifying events are listed later in this notice. After a qualifying event, COBRA continuation coverage must be offered to each person who is a "qualified beneficiary." You, your spouse, and your dependent children could become qualified beneficiaries if coverage under the Plan is lost because of the qualifying event. Under the Plan, qualified beneficiaries who elect COBRA continuation coverage must pay for COBRA continuation coverage.

If you're an employee, you'll become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the Plan because of the following qualifying events:

- Employment ends for any reason other than gross misconduct
- Your hours are reduced

If you're the spouse of an employee, you'll become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the Plan because of the following qualifying events:

- Your spouse dies
- Your spouse's hours of employment are reduced
- You become divorced or legally separated
- Your spouse's employment ends (other than for gross misconduct)
- Your spouse becomes entitled to Medicare

Your dependent children will become qualified beneficiaries if they lose coverage under the Plan because of the following qualifying events:

- The parent-employee dies
- The parent-employee's hours are reduced
- The parent-employee's employment ends
- The parent-employee becomes entitled to Medicare
- The parents become divorced or legally separated
- The child stops being eligible as a "dependent child"

When is COBRA continuation coverage available?

The Plan will offer COBRA continuation coverage to qualified beneficiaries only after the Plan Administrator has been notified that a qualifying event has occurred. The employer must notify the Plan Administrator of the following qualifying events:

- The employee dies
- The end of employment or reduction of hours
- The employee becomes entitled to Medicare

For all other qualifying events (divorce or legal separation of the employee and spouse or a dependent child's losing eligibility for coverage as a dependent child), you must notify the Plan Administrator within 60 days after the qualifying event occurs.

How is COBRA Continuation Coverage provided?

Once the Plan Administrator receives notice that a qualifying event has occurred, COBRA continuation coverage will be offered to each of the qualified beneficiaries. Each qualified beneficiary will have an independent right to elect COBRA continuation coverage. Covered employees may elect COBRA continuation coverage on behalf of their spouses, and parents may elect COBRA continuation coverage on behalf of their children.

COBRA continuation coverage is a temporary continuation of coverage that generally lasts for 18 months due to employment termination or reduction of hours of work. Certain qualifying events, or a second qualifying event during the initial period of coverage, may permit a beneficiary to receive a maximum of 36 months of coverage. There are also ways in which this 18-month period of COBRA continuation coverage can be extended:

Disability extension of 18-month COBRA period

If you or anyone in your family covered under the Plan is determined by Social Security to be disabled and you notify the Plan Administrator in a timely fashion, you and your entire family may be entitled to get up to an additional 11 months of COBRA continuation coverage, for a maximum of 29 months. The disability would have to have started at some time before the 60th day of COBRA continuation coverage and must last at least until the end of the 18-month period of COBRA continuation coverage.

Second qualifying event extension of 18-month COBRA period

If your family experiences another qualifying event during the 18 months of COBRA continuation coverage, the spouse and dependent children in your family can get up to 18 additional months of COBRA continuation coverage, for a maximum of 36 months, if the Plan is properly notified about the second qualifying event. This extension may be available to the spouse and any dependent children getting COBRA continuation coverage if the employee or former employee dies; becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both); gets divorced or legally separated; or if the dependent child stops being eligible under the Plan as a dependent child. This extension is only available if the second qualifying event would have caused the spouse or dependent child to lose coverage under the Plan had the first qualifying event not occurred.

Are there other coverage options besides COBRA?

Yes. Instead of enrolling in COBRA continuation coverage, there may be other coverage options for you and your family through the Health Insurance Marketplace, Medicare, Medicaid, [Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\)](#), or other group health plan coverage options (such as a spouse's plan) through what is called a "special enrollment period." Some of these options may cost less than COBRA continuation coverage. You can learn more about many of these options at www.healthcare.gov.

Can I enroll in Medicare instead of COBRA after my group health plan coverage ends?

In general, if you don't enroll in Medicare Part A or B when you are first eligible because you are still employed, after the initial enrollment period, you have an 8-month special enrollment period to sign up for Medicare Part A or B, beginning on the earlier of:

- The month after your employment ends
- The month after the current group health plan coverage ends

If you choose COBRA instead of enrolling in Medicare, you may face a Part B late enrollment penalty and a gap in coverage later. Enrolling in Medicare after electing COBRA may also cause your COBRA coverage to end, unless Medicare was effective on or before your COBRA election. For more information, visit www.medicare.gov/sign-up-change-plans/how-do-i-get-parts-a-b/part-a-part-b-sign-up-periods

If you are enrolled in both COBRA continuation coverage and Medicare, Medicare will generally pay first and COBRA continuation coverage will pay second. Certain plans may pay as if secondary to Medicare, even if you are not enrolled in Medicare. For more information visit www.medicare.gov/medicare-and-you.

If you have questions

Contact your Employer's Human Resources Department or your Medical Plan Administrator if you have questions concerning your Plan or your COBRA continuation coverage rights. For more information about your rights under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), including COBRA, the PPACA, and other laws affecting group health plans, contact the nearest Regional or District Office of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) in your area or visit www.dol.gov/ebsa.