Important Information About Your COBRA Continuation Coverage Rights

What is continuation coverage?
Federal law requires that most group health plans (including this Plan) give employees and their families the opportunity to continue their health care (medical and dental) coverage at their own cost when there is a “qualifying event” that would result in a loss of coverage. Continuation coverage is the same coverage that the Plan gives to other participants or beneficiaries under the Plan who are not receiving continuation coverage. Each “qualified beneficiary” who elects COBRA continuation coverage will have the same rights under the Plan as other participants or beneficiaries covered under the Plan, including open enrollment and special enrollment rights.

Who are the qualified beneficiaries?
A qualified beneficiary is an individual who was covered by a group health plan on the day before a qualifying event occurred that caused him or her to lose coverage. Depending on the type of qualifying event, qualified beneficiaries can include an employee or former employee, the covered employee’s spouse or former spouse, and the covered employee’s dependent child(ren).

Are there other coverage options besides COBRA Continuation Coverage?
Yes. There may be other coverage options for you and your family through the Health Insurance Marketplace, a Federal program providing resources enabling eligible citizens to find, compare, and buy private health insurance. A “qualifying event” that results in a loss of coverage provides a “special enrollment” period that allows you 60 days to enroll in an insurance plan on the Marketplace; otherwise you must wait until regular Open Enrollment. You may be eligible for a tax credit that lowers your monthly premiums and cost-sharing reductions (including your out-of-pocket costs for deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments), and you can see what your premium, deductibles, and out-of-pocket costs will be before you make a decision to enroll. You can access the Marketplace at www.HealthCare.gov. You may also be eligible for Medicaid, or other group health plan coverage options (such as a spouse’s plan) through what is called a “special enrollment period”, or through private health insurance exchanges. Legal residents of the State of California who do not have health insurance from their employer or another government program may be eligible to purchase health insurance through the State of California’s Health Insurance Marketplace called “Covered California”. For more information, please visit www.CoveredCA.com or call (888) 402-0737. Some of these options may cost less than COBRA continuation coverage.

If you elect COBRA continuation coverage, when will your coverage begin and how long will the coverage last?
If elected, COBRA continuation coverage will begin retroactively to the date of loss of coverage. In the case of a loss of coverage due to end of employment or reduction in hours of employment, coverage generally may be continued for 18 months. In the case of loss of coverage due to an employee’s death, divorce or legal separation, the employee’s becoming entitled to Medicare benefits or a dependent child ceasing to be a dependent under the terms of the plan, coverage may be continued for 36 months. When the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employee’s hours of employment, and the employee became entitled to Medicare benefits less than 18 months before the qualifying event, COBRA continuation coverage for qualified beneficiaries other than the employee lasts until 36 months after the date of Medicare entitlement. This notice shows the maximum period of continuation coverage available to the qualified beneficiaries.

Continuation coverage will be terminated before the end of the maximum period if:
- Any required premium is not paid in full on time,
- A qualified beneficiary first becomes covered, after electing continuation coverage, under another group health plan,
- A qualified beneficiary first becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both) after electing continuation coverage, or
- The employer ceases to provide any group health plan for its employees.

Continuation coverage may also be terminated for any reason the Plan would terminate coverage of a participant or beneficiary not receiving continuation coverage (such as fraud).

How can you extend the length of COBRA continuation coverage?
If you elect continuation coverage, an extension of the maximum period of coverage may be available if a qualified beneficiary is disabled or a second qualifying event occurs. You must notify your medical and/or dental plan of a disability or a second qualifying event in order to extend the period of continuation coverage. Failure to provide notice of a disability or second qualifying event may affect the right to extend the period of continuation coverage.

Disability
An 11-month extension of coverage may be available to the entire family of qualified beneficiaries enrolled in COBRA if any one of the qualified beneficiaries is determined under the Social Security Act (SSA) to be disabled. The disability has to have started at some time on or before the 60th day of COBRA continuation coverage and must last at least until the end of the 18-month period of continuation coverage. Each qualified beneficiary who has elected continuation coverage will be entitled to the 11-month disability extension, for a maximum of 29 months, if one of them qualifies. If the qualified beneficiary is determined to no longer be disabled under the SSA, you must notify the Plan of that fact within 30 days after that determination.

Second Qualifying Event
An 18-month extension of coverage, for a maximum of 36 months, will be available to spouses and dependent children who elect continuation coverage if a second qualifying event occurs during the first 18 months of continuation coverage. Such second qualifying
events may include the death of a covered employee, divorce or legal separation from the covered employee, the covered employee’s becoming entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both), or a dependent child’s ceasing to be eligible for coverage as a dependent under the Plan. These events can be a second qualifying event only if they would have caused the spouse or dependent child to lose coverage under the Plan if the first qualifying event had not occurred. You must notify the Plan within 60 days after a second qualifying event occurs if you want to extend your continuation coverage. For more information about extending the length of COBRA continuation coverage visit [http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/publications/cobraemployee.html](http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/publications/cobraemployee.html).

**How can you elect COBRA continuation coverage?**

To elect continuation coverage, you must complete the Election Form and furnish it according to the directions on the form. Each qualified beneficiary may independently elect continuation coverage. For example, the employee’s spouse may elect continuation coverage even if the employee does not. A parent may elect to continue coverage on behalf of any dependent children. The employee or the employee’s spouse can elect continuation coverage on behalf of any or all of the qualified beneficiaries.

In considering whether to elect continuation coverage, you should take into account that you have special enrollment rights under federal law. You have the right to request special enrollment in another group health plan for which you are otherwise eligible (such as a plan sponsored by your spouse’s employer) within 30 days after your group health coverage ends. You also have special enrollment rights to enroll in the Health Insurance Marketplace within 60 days after your group health coverage ends. You will also have the same special enrollment right at the end of continuation coverage if you get continuation coverage for the maximum time available to you.

**How much does COBRA continuation coverage cost?**

Generally, each qualified beneficiary may be required to pay the entire cost of continuation coverage. The amount a qualified beneficiary may be required to pay may not exceed 102 percent (or, in the case of an extension of continuation coverage due to a disability, 150 percent) of the cost to the group health plan (including both employer and employee contributions) for coverage of a similarly situated plan participant or beneficiary who is not receiving continuation coverage. The required payment for each continuation coverage period for each option is described in your personalized notice.

**When and how must payment for COBRA continuation coverage be made?**

You will be billed by your medical/dental plans for your first payment and all periodic payments for continuation coverage. If you elect continuation coverage, you do not need to send any payment with the Election Form.

**First payment for continuation coverage**

You must make your first payment for continuation coverage no later than 45 days after the date of your election (this is the date the Election Notice is post-marked, if mailed), or you will lose all continuation coverage rights under the Plan. You are responsible for making sure that the amount of your first payment is correct. You should contact your medical/dental plans to confirm the correct amount of your first payment since you will be paying retroactively to the date you lost coverage.

**Periodic payments for continuation coverage**

After you make your first payment for continuation coverage, you will be required to make periodic payments for each subsequent coverage period. The periodic payments can be made on a monthly basis. If you make a periodic payment on or before the first day of the coverage period to which it applies, your coverage under the Plan will continue for that coverage period without any break.

**Grace periods for periodic payments**

Although periodic payments are due on the dates shown above, you will be given a grace period of 30 days after the first day of the coverage period to make each periodic payment. Your continuation coverage will be provided for each coverage period as long as payment for that coverage period is made before the end of the grace period for that payment.

If you fail to make a periodic payment before the end of the grace period for that coverage period, you will lose all rights to continuation coverage under the Plan.

**For more information**

This notice does not fully describe continuation coverage or other rights under the Plan. More information about continuation coverage and your rights under the Plan is available through your insurance carrier(s). If you have any questions concerning the information in this notice or your rights to coverage, you should contact your insurance carrier(s).

For more information about health insurance options available through the Health Insurance Marketplace, and to locate assistance in your area who you can talk to about the different options, visit [www.HealthCare.gov](http://www.HealthCare.gov) or [www.CoveredCA.com](http://www.CoveredCA.com).

**Keep Your Plan Informed of Address Changes**

In order to protect your and your family’s rights, you should keep your department, the Personnel Department/Employee Benefits Division and your insurance carrier(s) informed of any changes to your address and the addresses of family members. You should also keep a copy, for your records, of any notices you send to your insurance carrier(s).

To update your address with the City, please contact your department’s HR section and complete a Form 41 change. Contact your insurance company to update your address with them as well.