



For Your Benefit

Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Program

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Do you have family members on your account?

If so, PEBB will soon require proof of their eligibility

If you have family members enrolled on your PEBB health coverage, you will receive a mailing from the PEBB Program in September explaining our new process for verifying your family members' eligibility.

PEBB already verifies the eligibility of some family members, like students over age 20. This fall, PEBB will start verifying eligibility for all covered family members enrolled under an employee's or non-Medicare retiree's account. (PEBB will later verify eligibility for Medicare retirees' family members.)

Why is the PEBB Program doing this?

Your health coverage is a valuable benefit—and costly for the state to provide. The PEBB Program spends \$1.5 billion annually on health care; this benefit becomes more costly for both you and the state when PEBB covers individuals who don't qualify for health coverage. This verification process ensures that the state uses taxpayer dollars fairly and consistently to only cover eligible family members.

What will I need to do?

In September, the PEBB Program will mail a letter to subscribers who have family members enrolled on their account. The letter will explain PEBB eligibility rules, and include forms for subscribers to either:

- Remove ineligible family members, or
- Provide proof for eligible family members (such as a copy of a tax return or similar legal document).

Subscribers must either remove or provide proof of eligibility for their family members by the end of the annual open enrollment period—November 30, 2009. If a subscriber doesn't respond, PEBB will disenroll all covered family members from the account in early 2010.



"As stewards of taxpayer dollars, the Public Employees Benefits Board has a responsibility to carefully review dependent eligibility. This effort will improve consistency, equity, and fairness for all employees."

Brian Sonntag, Washington State Auditor

Details on 2010 Benefits Coming

Look out for your October issue of *For Your Benefit*. The newsletter will be an expanded edition with 2010 monthly premiums and the open enrollment benefits fairs schedule, in addition to any health plan changes for next year.

Information also will be posted on our website at www.pebb.hca.wa.gov in early October.

Add newborns, adopted children to your PEBB coverage



If you're expecting to add a baby or adopted child to your family this year, congratulations! On top of the diapers, clothes, and car seats, there's one more important item to add to your child's well-being: your PEBB health insurance.

Based on state law, your PEBB health plan must cover your newborn for the first 21 days after birth. (This doesn't apply to newly adopted children.) However, you must complete and submit an enrollment form to assure that medical claims will be paid for your newborn or adopted child.

Here's how it works:

If you have a...	Complete and submit an enrollment form within 60 days of...
Newborn child	The newborn's birth
Newly adopted child	Adoption or assuming financial responsibility in anticipation of adoption

You can find enrollment/change forms on the PEBB's website at www.pebb.hca.wa.gov under Forms, or call PEBB Benefits Services at 1-800-200-1004 to request one. If you're an employee, submit your form to your personnel, payroll, or benefits office. Retirees can submit their form directly to the PEBB Program.

What to do if you're laid off (or think you might be)

It can be an unsettling thought—knowing that when the state's revenue decreases, so can the state's workforce.

If you've been told that your job will end (or you think it might end), contact your personnel, payroll, or benefits office. They can serve as a personal resource, and give you information specific to your situation. The following resources can also help you find out what to do next:



If you work for a...	Check these resources
<p>State agency, higher-education institution, or community and technical college</p>	<p>The Department of Personnel's Employee Layoff Information and Resources web page (www.dop.wa.gov), under "More DOP Services" link) provides information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations (to attend in-person or view online) • A checklist of what to do after you've received notice of a layoff through when you leave state service • Tools and resources to find employment, continue your health benefits, file for unemployment, retire, and get emotional and training support • Instructions for how to register for layoff lists and the General Government Transition Pool • Access to computers and resumé assistance through the Job Seeker Support Center • State rules and Q&As about the layoff process <p>The Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Program's website (www.pebb.hca.wa.gov) provides information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to continue your health benefits after a layoff • How you may qualify for the federal COBRA premium reduction • Continuation of coverage (under Publications link) <p>The Department of Retirement Systems' (DRS) website (www.drs.wa.gov) or your institution's Benefits office if you are a member of a Washington State higher education retirement plan provides information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining whether you're eligible for retirement • Planning for retirement (including seminars) <p>The Employment Security Department (ESD) website (www.esd.wa.gov) provides information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claiming unemployment benefits • Finding employment
<p>K-12 or Educational Service District</p>	<p>Local district personnel office for employment opportunities</p> <p>Local/state professional associations and universities for employment opportunities</p> <p>PEBB Program's website (www.pebb.hca.wa.gov)—<i>see above</i></p> <p>Employment Security Department (www.esd.wa.gov)—<i>see above</i></p>
<p>Employer group (counties, water districts, tribal governments, etc.)</p>	<p>PEBB Program's website (www.pebb.hca.wa.gov)—<i>see above</i></p> <p>Employment Security Department (www.esd.wa.gov)—<i>see above</i></p>

Help available for health insurance premiums

Do you need a way to cut your health care costs? The state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) offers help with the cost of health insurance premiums to households with a child who qualifies for its Apple Health for Kids program.

If your household income is below a certain level, you may qualify for help in paying your PEBB medical plan premiums as an employee, or while enrolled in Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), leave without pay, or other continuation coverage. If you or your child already receives a medical coupon from the state of Washington, call the DSHS Premium Payment Program toll free at 1-800-562-6136 and select option 3.

Covering children without health insurance

Washington's Apple Health for Kids also provides comprehensive health-care coverage for children in families with a household income of up to 300 percent of federal income guidelines (about \$66,156 annually for a family of four). Depending on your family's income, health-care coverage for your children may be free, or cost as little as \$20 per month.



Making changes when you gain or lose eligibility for state medical programs

You can make certain changes to your PEBB coverage if you or your dependents become eligible or lose eligibility for a state medical assistance program (including Children's Health Insurance Program [CHIP] and Medicaid). This special open enrollment allows you to add or remove an eligible family member or to change medical and dental plans outside of PEBB's annual open enrollment period. You must request changes within **60 days** of gaining or losing eligibility for a state medical assistance program. The changes must be based on the event that qualifies for a special open enrollment.

For more information

To find out if you qualify for premium assistance from DSHS, visit their website at <http://hrsa.dshs.wa.gov/applehealth/> or call 1-877-543-7669.

Changes to the Flexible Spending Account debit card

The PEBB Program offers a flexible spending account (FSA) to eligible employees who work for state agencies, higher-education institutions, and community and technical colleges. The FSA is a tax-free savings account allowed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that helps you pay for your family's health-care costs, such as health plan copays and coinsurance.

FSA participants have the option to use a FlexFunds debit card to pay for eligible expenses at pharmacies. Starting July 1, 2009, you can only use the FSA

debit card at pharmacies that have implemented the IRS-approved Inventory Information Approval System (IIAS) or have certified that 90% of the items sold during the previous calendar year were FSA-eligible expenses. The ASIFlex website (www.asiflex.com/pebb) has a list of stores that use the IIAS.

If you regularly use a pharmacy that has not implemented the IIAS, you can still submit your claims using an ASIFlex claim form. You can find this form on ASIFlex's website or call to request a copy at 1-800-659-3035.

Interested in enrolling in an FSA?

You can enroll in an FSA during PEBB's annual open enrollment period, **October 26 – November 30, 2009**. For more information about how the FSA works, visit ASIFlex's website at www.asiflex.com/pebb.



Will your family be covered after your death?

If you cover family members on your PEBB health insurance, these tips may help your family plan for what to do if you die.

Insurance coverage doesn't continue automatically for your family members, so they must act quickly to continue their PEBB benefits. After notifying your employer's personnel, payroll, or benefits office of your death, your family members will receive a *Continuation of Coverage Election Notice* booklet from the PEBB Program. This booklet provides more details and enrollment forms for the options below.

Your family members must complete and submit enrollment form(s) for their selected option within 60 days of receiving the booklet, or they will lose their rights to continue PEBB health coverage.

Options for continuing PEBB health coverage

Retiree coverage

Your survivors may qualify for PEBB retiree coverage if they immediately receive a monthly retirement benefit or a lump-sum payment from a state of Washington-sponsored retirement system. They can apply for or defer PEBB retiree coverage even if they were not enrolled at the time of your death.

If your family members have other comprehensive medical coverage through an employer and wish to defer PEBB retiree coverage, they must complete and submit the *PEBB-Sponsored Retiree Coverage Election Form*. This preserves their rights to PEBB retiree coverage for as long as they have that other coverage and continue to meet PEBB eligibility criteria. To enroll in PEBB retiree coverage at a later date, they must complete and submit the form to PEBB within **60 days** of when the

other coverage ends, and show proof of continuous enrollment in the other health plan.

COBRA or PEBB Extension of Coverage

Survivors who do not qualify for a monthly or lump-sum retirement benefit cannot continue PEBB coverage as a retiree. However, they can continue their PEBB health coverage temporarily through the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) or PEBB Extension of Coverage. They can apply for COBRA or PEBB Extension of Coverage even if they were not enrolled at the time of your death; however, they cannot defer enrollment in COBRA or PEBB Extension of Coverage.

If your family has questions

For more information about their continuation coverage options, your family members can contact the PEBB Program at 1-800-200-1004.

Keep in touch!

Whether you're changing your address, name, or family status, keep your personnel, payroll, or benefits office in the loop. They can update this information in the state systems to make sure you'll continue to receive employment and benefit information.



To obtain this document in another format, call our Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator at 360-923-2805. TTY users (deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired), call 360-923-2701 or call toll-free 1-888-923-5622.