

Summary of the COBRA Premium Reduction Provisions under ARRA, Amended

President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) on February 17, 2009. ARRA has been amended three times; on December 19, 2009 by the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2010, on March 2, 2010 by the Temporary Extension Act of 2010 and on April 15, 2010, by the Continuing Extension Act of 2010. These laws give Assistance Eligible Individuals the right to pay reduced COBRA premiums for periods of coverage beginning on or after February 17, 2009 and can last up to 15 months.

To be considered an Assistance Eligible Individual and get reduced premiums you:

- MUST have a continuation coverage election opportunity related to an involuntary termination of employment that occurred at some time from September 1, 2008 through May 31, 2010;
- MUST have become eligible for COBRA coverage as a result of a reduction in hours occurring between September 1, 2008 and May 31, 2010, followed by an involuntary termination between March 2, 2009 and May 31, 2010.
- MUST elect coverage;
- MUST NOT be eligible for Medicare; AND
- MUST NOT be eligible for coverage under any other group health plan, such as a plan sponsored by a successor employer or a spouse's employer.

⇒ IMPORTANT ⇐

- If, after you elect COBRA and while you are paying the reduced premium, you become eligible for other group health plan coverage or Medicare you MUST notify the plan in writing. If you do not, you may be subject to a tax penalty.
- Electing the premium reduction disqualifies you for the Health Coverage Tax Credit. If you are eligible for the Health Coverage Tax Credit, which could be more valuable than the premium reduction, you will have received a notification from the IRS.
- The amount of the premium reduction is recaptured for certain high income individuals. If the amount you earn for the year is more than \$125,000 (or \$250,000 for married couples filing a joint federal income tax return) all or part of the premium reduction may be recaptured by an increase in your income tax liability for the year. If you think that your income may exceed the amounts above, you may wish to consider waiving your right to the premium reduction. For more information, consult your tax preparer or visit the IRS webpage on ARRA at www.irs.gov.

For general information regarding your plan's COBRA coverage or for specific information related to your plan's administration of the ARRA Premium Reduction or to notify the plan of your ineligibility to continue paying reduced premiums, you can contact State Health Plan Customer Services at **1-888-234-2416**.

If you are denied treatment as an Assistance Eligible Individual you may have the right to have the denial reviewed. For more information regarding reviews or for general information about the ARRA Premium Reduction go to:

www.dol.gov/COBRA or call 1-866-444-EBSA (3272)