

Leave Without Pay (LWOP) and Military Leave

Leave without Pay (LWOP) is a temporary absence from the job in a non-pay status that, in most cases, is granted upon request of the employee.

LWOP coverage is a temporary continuation of PEBB medical, dental, and life insurance coverage that may be available to employees and their family on a self pay basis if the:

- Employee is on authorized leave without pay
- Employee is laid off due to a reduction in force (RIF)
- Employee is receiving time-loss benefits under worker's compensation
- Employee is applying for disability retirement
- Employee is called to active military duty (may also continue life insurance for up to 29 months)
- Employee is on approved educational leave (may also continue LTD for a maximum of 24 months)
- Employee is a part-time faculty member between periods of eligibility
- Employee has reverted to a position that is not eligible for employer-sponsored benefits
- Employee is awaiting a hearing for a dismissal action
- Employee is a seasonal employee, and is between seasons of employment

The employee may elect to continue medical only, dental only, or both medical and dental coverage, and life insurance. If the employee is on approved educational leave LTD may also be continued for up to 24 months.

The event that triggers the eligibility for LWOP also triggers a special open enrollment, giving the employee the opportunity to change plans when enrolling in LWOP coverage.

The employee and dependents have 60 days after the date the Continuation of Coverage Election Notice is provided to enroll.

Employees may self-pay the group premium rate for up to 29 months, part-time faculty for up to 18 months. Refer to WAC 182-12-133 and WAC 182-12-141.

Under PEBB rules, employees awaiting a hearing for a dismissal action are eligible to continue insurance coverage on a self-pay basis under the same terms as an employee under LWOP coverage or to midnight, the end of the month in which a decision has been made. Refer to WAC 182-12-148.

Examples of Qualifying Events include:

| LWOP Qualifying Event | Qualified Participants | Maximum Length of Coverage |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Authorized LWOP | Employee and eligible dependents | 29 months 18 months for part-time faculty |
| Layoff / Reduction in Force (RIF) | Employee and eligible dependents | 29 months 18 months for part-time faculty |
| Receiving time-loss benefits under worker's compensation | Employee and eligible dependents | 29 months 18 months for part-time faculty |
| Application for disability retirement | Employee and eligible dependents | 29 months 18 months for part-time faculty |
| Active military duty | Employee and eligible dependents | 29 months medical/dental 18 months for part-time faculty |
| Approved educational leave | Employee and eligible dependents | 29 months medical/dental/life 24 months LTD 18 months for part-time faculty |
| Employee awaiting a hearing for a dismissal action | Employee and eligible dependents | Midnight, the end of the month the decision is made |

Refer to WAC 182-12-133 and WAC 182-12-138.

Reporting Eligibility Status when the Employee is on Self-Pay

Notify the PEBB Program immediately if the employee:

- Returns to work in an eligible position
- Terminates or resigns
- Files for disability retirement; or
- Receives final decision on an appeal

Procedure

1. Contact the PEBB Program at 1-800-200-1004 to terminate the employee's self-pay coverage on the last day of the month prior to the return-to-work date. HCA will reimburse the employee any overpayment of self-pay premiums.
2. Re-enroll the employee in the insurance system. The effective date would be the first of the month the employee returns to work.

Agencies that do not have access to the insurance system should forward the enrollment form to the PEBB Program for keying into the Pay1 system. PEBB coverage begins the first of the month in which the employee returns to work.