

VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**ADMINISTRATIVE
REGULATION NO. 4154 / 4254**

ADOPTED: 02/14/96

CLASSIFICATION: Personnel

REVISED:

SUBJECT: Continuation of Benefits Plan Pursuant to Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) (P.L. 99-272)

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) is effective October 1, 1986 for employees and families of employees of the Ventura County Office of Education. This act allows individuals, under specified circumstances, to purchase continuation of medical and dental insurance benefits upon expiration of coverage for benefits previously available as a result of an employment relationship with the Ventura County Office of Education.

Eligibility, and period of eligibility, for continuation of benefits shall be limited to one or more of the following qualifying events, for time periods specified:

QUALIFYING EVENT	CONTINUATION PRIVILEGE
Employee terminates (due to anything other than gross misconduct.)	Employee and dependents may continue coverage for up to 18 months.
Employee reduces work hours (voluntarily or involuntarily) to less than 4 hours per day or 20 hours per week.	Employee and dependents may continue coverage for up to 18 months
Employee retires prior to eligibility for benefits under policy numbers 4154 or 4254.	Employee and dependents may continue coverage for up to 18 months.
Employee legally separates or divorces.	Former spouse and dependents may continue coverage for up to 36 months.
Employee dies.	Spouse and/or dependent children may continue coverage for up to 36 months.
Dependent child loses eligibility due to age/marital status.	Child may continue coverage for up to 36 months.

(Effective 10-1-90): If, while self-paying, during the 18 month eligibility period, a former employee or dependent receive a determination from the Social Security Administration that the former employee or dependent was disabled at the time of termination of employment or reduction of hours, the disabled individual may be eligible for a total of 29 months of continued coverage. The disabled individual must notify the Payroll Department of the Ventura County Office of Education within the initial 18 month coverage period and within 60 days of Social Security's disability determination. Verbal notice is not binding until confirmed in writing. Premium for the additional 11 months will be equal to 150% of the premium for regular and continuing employees of the Ventura County Office of Education.

Continuation privilege indicated is the maximum time allowed; earlier termination will occur under the following circumstances:

Coverage under another group insurance program.

Revisions to the law, effective 10-1-90, provide that other coverage will not terminate eligibility for continued coverage if there is a pre-existing condition that is excluded from coverage in the new group insurance program. In this event, coverage may continue until: (1) expiration of the pre-existing condition limitation clause; (2) "recovery" (e.g., satisfaction of the plan's "treatment free" provision, if applicable); or (3) the end of the maximum coverage period (18 or 36 months, unless coverage may be terminated earlier, for example, for non-payment of required premiums.)

Premiums are not paid within 30 days of the due date.

Entitlement to Medicare benefits (covered family members not eligible for Medicare may continue coverage)

Termination of Ventura County Office of Education group insurance plan(s).

Upon expiration of benefits for any of the above events, or expiration of the maximum benefit period, coverage cannot be reinstated under provisions of this policy.

The Ventura County Office of Education shall be responsible for notifying all current employees and their families of the availability of continuation of coverage. Thereafter the VCOE shall notify individuals in the event of:

Termination of employment

Reduction in hours

Employee death

Employee entitlement to Medicare

If an individual does not receive notice of the opportunity to elect continuation coverage, he/she should contact the Payroll Department for an election form.

Upon receipt of notice of qualifying event, the qualified individual has 60 days to elect continuation of coverage. If continuation of coverage is not elected within the sixty (60 day period, the individual(s) shall not be eligible for future coverage.

The employee or covered dependent is responsible for notifying the Ventura County Office of Education in the event of:

Divorce or legal separation

Cessation of dependent child coverage

The Ventura County Office of Education shall be notified of these qualifying events within 60 days of the event to qualify for continuation of benefits privilege.

Benefits available are those benefits the individual was covered by on the day before the qualifying event.

Should dependent(s) suffer more than one qualifying event, the spouse and/or dependent children may be eligible for an additional period of continuation coverage not to exceed a total of 36 months. For example, if the employee quits, the employee and dependents will be eligible for 18 months of continuation coverage. If, while self-paying, the dependent child ceases to be a dependent under the plan, the child will be eligible for an additional period of continuation coverage. In no event will the total period of continuation coverage for multiple qualifying events exceed 36 months.

Premium charges for continuing benefits shall be 102% of the premiums charged for regular and continuing employees of the Ventura County Office of Education. **All premiums shall be paid to the VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION.** Premiums shall be due the first (1st) day of each month in advance. If the premium is not received within 30 days of the due date, coverage shall be cancelled back to the first day of the month (the due date). If coverage is cancelled for failure to pay premiums, the coverage shall not be reinstated. Partial payment shall not be accepted. Payment shall be in the form of cashier's check or money order. (Cash is acceptable if personally delivered.)

The Ventura County Office of Education shall notify individuals enrolled in the Continuation of Benefits Plan of revised premium rate due at least 30 days in advance of any premium rate change.

All notices regarding eligibility, premium rate change, termination of eligibility or other communication necessary for the administration of this policy shall be mailed, via regular U. S. mail, to the last known address of the covered individual(s). Covered individual(s) shall be responsible for providing the Ventura County Office of Education with written notice of any change of address or change in status.