

## COBRA: Temporary Health Coverage (adapted from U.S. Department of Labor)

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) provides certain former employees and their families the right to temporary continuation of health coverage at group rates. Group health coverage for COBRA participants is usually more expensive than health coverage for active employees, since COBRA participants generally pay the entire health insurance premium themselves. It is ordinarily less expensive, though, than individual health coverage.

This coverage is only available when previous group coverage is lost due to certain specific events. These "qualifying events" differ for employees, spouses and dependent children. (For details, see "Frequently Asked Questions about COBRA Continuation Health Coverage" at the U.S. Department of Labor website -- [www.dol.gov/ebsa/faqs/faq\\_consumer\\_cobra.html](http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/faqs/faq_consumer_cobra.html)).

If you are the employee, you are eligible for COBRA if your employment is terminated for reasons other than gross misconduct, or if you lose coverage due to a reduction in the number of hours you work. (This assumes that you were enrolled in your employer's health plan when you worked, and that the health plan continues in effect for active employees. It also assumes that you worked for a private-sector employer with 20 or more employees, an employee organization, or a state or local government.)

In certain cases, a retired employee and family may be qualified beneficiaries. With some exceptions, COBRA coverage is available for up to 18 months.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor. "Frequently Asked Questions About COBRA Continuation Health Coverage." ([www.dol.gov/ebsa/faqs/faq\\_consumer\\_cobra.html](http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/faqs/faq_consumer_cobra.html))