



Virginia Department of
HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

Office of
Health Benefits

State Health Benefits Program

Military Leave Fact Sheet for Employees

When state employees are called to active military service, the impact on health benefits coverage varies according to the type of leave taken. If you are on:

- **Paid leave**, there are no changes to your health benefits and Flexible Reimbursement Accounts (FRAs).
- **Leave without pay (LWOP)**, you and/or your covered dependents may continue state health benefits coverage and there are several options available to you for your Medical Flexible Reimbursement Account. See below for additional information.

Also remember that health benefits coverage through the United States government is available for military personnel on active duty and their dependents.

Health Benefits and FRA Options While on Military LWOP

State employees on military LWOP may continue health benefits for themselves and/or covered family members under Extended Coverage, **with the State's contribution to active employee premiums**. The employee contribution for health care coverage will be based on the membership level you select. The 2% administrative fee normally added to Extended Coverage premiums will not be charged. See the [Extended Coverage Monthly Rates for Military Leave](#).

You have 60 days to enroll in Extended Coverage from the date you are notified by your agency of your rights under this coverage. There is an application process for Extended Coverage. Your agency Benefits Administrator should provide the materials you need. Also keep in mind that going on active duty will affect any Flexible Reimbursement Accounts in which you are currently enrolled (see page 2).

Extended Coverage: This is a term used to describe coverage that government employers are required to offer under the provisions of the Public Health Service Act. These provisions also apply to private employers under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986

(COBRA). In certain instances, such as going on active military LWOP duty, employees and enrolled family members may continue coverage for a specified period of time.

You may enroll in Extended Coverage for up to 24 months. Coverage will begin the first of the month following the time your military LWOP begins. This may not be the beginning of the month after you report for duty, because you may have accumulated leave that you wish to use first.

Certificate of Coverage: Evidence of your prior health coverage will be provided to you, as required by federal law. You or a covered family member may need to furnish the certificate upon becoming eligible under a group health plan that excludes coverage for certain medical conditions that existed before enrollment. Check with the plan administrator of the new group to see if you need to provide this certificate.

Returning from active military duty: If you apply for health benefits coverage within 31 days of your reinstatement, your state health benefits active employee coverage will begin either the first day of the month in which you were reinstated or the first of the following month, depending on individual circumstances. Employees returning from military leave of longer than 30 days have the full menu of health benefits choices.

For some returning employees, military health coverage may continue for up to 6 months. If you choose to defer your enrollment in the state health plan upon your return to work, you can enroll at a later date. Your enrollment would be considered a qualifying mid-year event (QME) due to your loss of eligibility for the military health benefit coverage. When enrolling with the QME, you have to submit your election request within 31 days of your loss of coverage. Your coverage would be effective prospectively based on the date of the event or the date your request was received, whichever is later.

Carefully consider your options to ensure that you avoid a break in coverage. State health benefit coverage always begins on the first day of the month and ends on the last day of the month. Military health coverage may end any day of the month.

Medical Reimbursement Account: You may continue participation in a Medical Reimbursement Account through the end of the plan year, or terminate your participation in the account. If you continue participation, your options include a pre-tax lump-sum deduction taken from the final payroll before leave begins or being billed on an after-tax basis. Additional information may be found in the [Flexible Benefits Program Sourcebook](#).

Dependent Care Account: You cannot continue to participate in a Dependent Care Account under Extended Coverage.

Contact your Benefits Administrator if you have questions or for additional information.