

HEALTH BENEFITS E-NEWS

*Department of Human Resource Management
Office of Health Benefits*

June 17, 2011

COBRA Election Notice Updated for July 1 COBRA Start Date

An updated *Election Notice* will be available within the next few days on the Resource Center page at <http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/resources/benefitsadmin/notices.html>. It will include updated premium information for July 1, and ARRA premium assistance information has been removed. You will also note that if you are sending the Notice to covered children using their status instead of names, available guidance suggests that you should use "dependent child(ren) covered under the plan prior to the qualifying event" instead of just "dependent children." This is the appropriate Notice to use for qualifying events in June, resulting in a loss of coverage on June 30. As a reminder, COBRA *Election Notices* should be generated within 14 days of the loss of coverage due to the qualifying event, not before coverage is lost.

As a reminder, if timely *Election Notices* have been generated, there should be no need to provide ARRA premium assistance information going forward. The last ARRA opportunity should have included individuals who were involuntarily terminated no later than May 31, 2010, started layoff leave of absence no later than June 1, 2010, and completed that leave no later than May 31, 2011. Anyone meeting these criteria should have had an *Election Notice* generated by June 14 for a COBRA start date of June 1. If you receive any ARRA *Requests for Premium Assistance* that are still within the COBRA 60-day election window, please key the COBRA election and forward the *Request for Treatment as an Assistance Eligible Individual*, along with your confirmation and brief summary of the involuntary termination of employment (or dispute of the request, if appropriate) to the Office of Health Benefits for review and processing. These will be handled as quickly as possible. If the qualified beneficiary receives and pays a full-premium COBRA bill and they are later approved for premium assistance, any overpayment will be credited to them immediately upon approval of the ARRA benefit.

Wellness Posters Sent to State Agencies for Posting

State agencies were mailed supplies of two wellness posters on June 16. The first poster emphasizes the importance of annual wellness check-ups and also stresses that the plan pays 100 percent. A second poster highlights the free dental preventive benefit that employees have under all the state health plans. Please post these in a place visible to your agency's employees, such as bulletin boards, in cafeterias or even in restrooms. If you need additional posters, please write your request on the bottom of the Commonwealth of Virginia Materials Order Form found at http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/resources/benefitsadmin/material_order.html. Supplies are limited. The posters will be up on the DHRM Web site shortly. As always, thank you for your assistance.