

60 Day Health Insurance Waiver

The State of Kansas provides group health insurance for benefit-eligible faculty and staff. Information about the plan options and premiums can be found on the HR/EO website at http://www.hreo.ku.edu/benefits_pay/benefits_info/health_insurance_programs.

1. When is health insurance coverage for faculty and staff available?

The State's health insurance program mandates that new employees serve a 60-day waiting period before they are eligible for health insurance coverage. New employees become eligible for coverage the first day of the month following completion of the 60-day waiting period.

2. Is there a waiver provision for the 60-day waiting period?

Under the State's policy, the mandatory waiting period will be waived only if the following two conditions are met: (1) the **prospective** new employee is not entitled to continuation of health insurance benefits (COBRA) from his/her previous employer **and** (2) the mandatory waiting period poses an obstacle to recruiting the **prospective** employee and causes a manifest injustice or hardship to the **prospective** employee.

3. What is COBRA continuation coverage?

Most employers are required by United States law (COBRA) to provide continuation coverage for group health insurance plans for former employees. Many newly hired faculty and staff **may** not qualify for a waiting period waiver because they are eligible for COBRA continuation coverage for health insurance from the previous employer. *Please note that the cost of the COBRA coverage will not be considered by the State for a waiver approval.*

Student coverage offered by many universities is **not** considered a **group** health insurance plan and therefore is not required to provide COBRA continuation coverage. And, prospective employees who will come from employers outside the United States will **not** have COBRA contribution coverage rights.

4. Is a waiver possible even if COBRA continuation coverage is available?

If the COBRA continuation coverage is with an HMO that only provides benefits in restricted geographic area which will not encompass the prospective employee's new residential area **and** the prospective employee does not have an option to change to a plan that will provide coverage in new area, the State has recognized that this "COBRA continuation coverage" **may** qualify to waive the waiting period if the other conditions are met.

Also, if the prospective employee has COBRA continuation coverage, additional information can be provided about extenuating circumstances that should be taken into account (e.g., the prospective employee has other job offers, is uniquely qualified or has extraordinary qualifications for the position, has personal medical concerns, the position requires unique skills, or other information to support that the waiver causes a "manifest injustice or hardship.")

What does a prospective employee need to do to request a waiver of the 60-day waiting period?

The Benefits office has been assigned the responsibility of coordinating and verifying all waiver requests for the Lawrence campus. To request a waiver, the prospective employee should complete the 60-day waiver for health insurance form found at http://www.hreo.ku.edu/documents/category_details/10. It would be helpful if the prospective employee would attach a letter reinforcing the hiring obstacle criteria. The waiver request **must be submitted prior to the prospective employee's proposed hire date** and the letter from the department head **should state in detail why the waiting period is an obstacle to hiring the prospective employee and causes a manifest injustice and/or hardship on the employee. Please provide specific information unique to the employee's situation to support the reason for the waiver.** The waiver request **must** be submitted so that approval/denial can be determined before the hire date. After the information is verified, Benefits will submit the request to the Kansas Health Policy Authority for approval. If the waiting period is waived, coverage will be effective the first of the month following the hire date.

5. If the prospective employee or the department has additional questions, who should they contact?

If there are any questions concerning this process, please call Benefits at 864-4946, e-mail benefits@ku.edu or drop by Room 150, Carruth O'Leary Hall.