

# GENERAL NOTICE OF COBRA CONTINUATION COVERAGE RIGHTS

## \*\* CONTINUATION COVERAGE RIGHTS UNDER COBRA \*\*

Date of Notice: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>TO:</b>	Employee, Spouse and/or Dependents (if any) _____ (Address) _____ (City, State, Zip Code) _____
<b>FROM:</b>	Plan Administrator _____ Bank of Travelers Rest (Address) _____ 42 Plaza Drive, Travelers Rest, SC 29690 (Telephone No.) _____ (864)- 834-9031

You're getting this notice because you recently gained coverage under a group health plan (the Plan). This notice has important information about your right to COBRA continuation coverage, which is a temporary extension of coverage under the Plan. **This notice generally explains COBRA continuation coverage, when it may become available to you and your family, and what you need to do to protect the right to receive it.**

**Read this notice carefully to help understand your COBRA rights.** Keep in mind that when you become eligible for COBRA, you may also become eligible for other coverage options that may cost less than COBRA continuation coverage.

The right to COBRA continuation coverage was created by a federal law, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA). COBRA continuation coverage can become available to you when you would otherwise lose your group health coverage. It can also become available to other members of your family who are covered under the Plan when they would otherwise lose their group health coverage. This notice does not fully describe COBRA continuation coverage or other rights under the Plan. For additional and more complete information about your rights and obligations under the Plan and under federal law, you should review the Plan's Summary Plan Description or contact the Plan Administrator.

**You may have other options available to you when you lose group health coverage.** For example, you may be eligible to buy an individual plan through the Health Insurance Marketplace. By enrolling in coverage through the Marketplace, you may qualify for lower costs on your monthly premiums and lower out-of-pocket costs. Additionally, you may qualify for a 30-day special enrollment period for another group health plan for which you are eligible (such as a spouse's plan), even if that plan generally doesn't accept late enrollees.

## WHAT IS COBRA CONTINUATION COVERAGE?

COBRA continuation coverage is a continuation of Plan coverage when it would otherwise end because of a life event known as a “qualifying event.” Specific qualifying events are listed later in this notice. After a qualifying event, COBRA continuation coverage must be offered to each person who is a “qualified beneficiary.” You, your spouse and your dependent children could become qualified beneficiaries if coverage under the Plan is lost because of the qualifying event. Under the Plan, qualified beneficiaries who elect COBRA continuation coverage may be required to pay for COBRA continuation coverage.

### EMPLOYEE

If you’re an employee, you’ll become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the Plan because either of the following qualifying events happens:

- Your hours of employment are reduced, or
- Your employment ends for any reason other than your gross misconduct.

### SPOUSE

If you’re the spouse of an employee, you’ll become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the Plan because any of the following qualifying events happens:

- Your spouse dies;
- Your spouse’s hours of employment are reduced;
- Your spouse’s employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct;
- Your spouse becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B or both); or
- You become divorced or legally separated from your spouse. In the event your spouse, who is the employee, reduces or terminates your coverage under the Plan in anticipation of a divorce or legal separation which later occurs, the divorce or legal separation may be considered a qualifying event even though the coverage was reduced or terminated before the divorce or separation.

### DEPENDENT CHILDREN

Your dependent children (including any child born to or placed for adoption with you during the period of COBRA coverage who is properly enrolled in the Plan and any child of yours who is receiving benefits under the Plan pursuant to a qualified medical child support order) will become qualified beneficiaries if they lose coverage under the Plan because any of the following qualifying events happens:

- The parent-employee dies;
- The parent-employee’s hours of employment are reduced;
- The parent-employee’s employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct;
- The parent-employee becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (Part A, Part B or both);
- The parents become divorced or legally separated; or

- The child stops being eligible for coverage under the plan as a “dependent child.”

## RETIREE COVERAGE

*[If the Plan provides retiree health coverage, include this section.]*

Sometimes, filing a proceeding in bankruptcy under title 11 of the United States Code can be a qualifying event. If a proceeding in bankruptcy is filed with respect to the Company, and that bankruptcy results in the loss of coverage of any retired employee covered under the Plan, the retired employee will become a qualified beneficiary. The retired employee’s spouse, surviving spouse, and dependent children will also become qualified beneficiaries if bankruptcy results in the loss of their coverage under the Plan.

*Health Coverage Tax Credit:* Certain individuals may be eligible for a federal income tax credit—the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC)—that can help with monthly COBRA premium payments. The HCTC is a refundable tax credit for up to 72.5 percent of the premiums paid for specified types of health insurance coverage (including COBRA coverage). The HCTC is available to certain trade-displaced workers, including eligible trade adjustment assistance (TAA) recipients, alternative (ATAA) recipients or reemployment (RTAA) recipients, as well as certain individuals who are receiving pension payments from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). In some cases, eligible individuals may be entitled to a second opportunity to elect COBRA coverage following a determination of their TAA eligibility. For questions about the HCTC, you can contact the IRS at: 1-800-829-1040. You may also visit the HCTC website at [www.irs.gov/hctc](http://www.irs.gov/hctc).

## WHEN IS COBRA COVERAGE AVAILABLE?

The Plan will offer COBRA continuation coverage to qualified beneficiaries only after the Plan Administrator has been notified that a qualifying event has occurred. The employer must notify the Plan Administrator of the following qualifying events:

- The end of employment or reduction of hours of employment;
- Death of the employee;
- *[add if Plan provides retiree health coverage: Commencement of a proceeding in bankruptcy with respect to the Company;];* or
- The employee’s becoming entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B or both).

**For all other qualifying events (divorce or legal separation of the employee and spouse or a dependent child’s losing eligibility for coverage as a dependent child), you must notify the Plan Administrator within 60 days after the qualifying event occurs.** You must provide this notice to: *[Enter name of appropriate party]*. The Plan procedures for this notice, including a description of any required information or documentation, can be found in the most recent Summary Plan Description or by contacting the Plan Administrator. If these procedures are not followed or if the notice is not provided in writing to the Plan Administrator during the 60-day notice period, you will lose your right to elect COBRA continuation coverage.

## HOW IS COBRA COVERAGE PROVIDED?

Once the Plan Administrator receives timely notice that a qualifying event has occurred, COBRA continuation coverage will be offered to each of the qualified beneficiaries. Each qualified beneficiary will have an independent right to elect COBRA continuation coverage. Covered employees may elect COBRA continuation coverage on behalf of their spouses, and parents may elect COBRA continuation coverage on behalf of their children. If COBRA continuation coverage is not elected within the 60-day election period, a qualified beneficiary will lose the right to elect COBRA continuation coverage.

COBRA continuation coverage is a temporary continuation of coverage.

- When the qualifying event is the death of the employee, the employee's becoming entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B or both), your divorce or legal separation, or a dependent child's losing eligibility as a dependent child, COBRA continuation coverage may last for up to a total of **36 months**.
- When the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employee's hours of employment, COBRA continuation coverage generally lasts for only up to a total of **18 months**. There are two ways in which this 18-month period of COBRA continuation coverage can be extended.

Also, when the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employee's hours of employment, and the employee became entitled to Medicare benefits less than 18 months before the qualifying event, COBRA continuation coverage for qualified beneficiaries other than the employee lasts until 36 months after the date of Medicare entitlement. For example, if a covered employee becomes entitled to Medicare 8 months before the date on which his employment terminates, COBRA continuation coverage for his spouse and children can last up to 36 months after the date of Medicare entitlement, which is equal to 28 months after the date of the qualifying event (36 months minus 8 months).

### DISABILITY EXTENSION

If you or anyone in your family covered under the Plan is determined by the Social Security Administration to be disabled and you notify the Plan Administrator in a timely fashion, you and your entire family may be entitled to get up to an additional 11 months of COBRA continuation coverage, for a total maximum of 29 months. The disability would have to have started at some time before the 60th day of COBRA continuation coverage and must last at least until the end of the 18-month period of continuation coverage.

The Plan procedures for this notice, including a description of any required information or documentation, the name of the appropriate party to whom notice must be sent, and the time period for giving notice, can be found in the most recent Summary Plan Description or by contacting the Plan Administrator. If these procedures are not followed or if the notice is not provided in writing to the Plan Administrator during the 60-day notice period and within 18 months after the covered employee's termination of employment or reduction of hours, there will be no disability extension of COBRA continuation coverage. The affected individual must also notify the Plan Administrator within 30 days of any final determination that the individual is no longer disabled.

## **SECOND QUALIFYING EVENT EXTENSION**

If your family experiences another qualifying event during the 18 months of COBRA continuation coverage, the spouse and dependent children in your family can get up to 18 additional months of COBRA continuation coverage, for a maximum of 36 months, if notice of the second qualifying event is properly given to the Plan. This extension may be available to the spouse and any dependent children receiving COBRA continuation coverage if the employee or former employee dies, becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B or both) or gets divorced or legally separated; or if the dependent child stops being eligible under the Plan as a dependent child. This extension is only available if the second qualifying event would have caused the spouse or dependent child to lose coverage under the Plan had the first qualifying event not occurred.

The Plan procedures for this notice, including a description of any required information or documentation, the name of the appropriate party to whom notice must be sent, and the time period for giving notice, can be found in the most recent Summary Plan Description or by contacting the Plan Administrator. If these procedures are not followed or if the notice is not provided in writing to the Plan Administrator during the 60-day notice period, there will be no extension of COBRA continuation coverage due to a second qualifying event.

## **ARE THERE OTHER COVERAGE OPTIONS BESIDES COBRA?**

Yes. Instead of enrolling in COBRA continuation coverage, there may be other coverage options for you and your family through the Health Insurance Marketplace, Medicaid or other group health plan coverage options (such as a spouse's plan) through what is called a "special enrollment period." Some of these options may cost less than COBRA continuation coverage. You can learn more about many of these options at [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

## **IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS**

Questions concerning your Plan or your COBRA continuation coverage rights should be addressed to the contact or contacts identified below. For more information about your rights under ERISA, including COBRA, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and other laws affecting group health plans, contact the nearest Regional or District Office of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) in your area or visit [www.dol.gov/ebsa](http://www.dol.gov/ebsa). (Addresses and phone numbers of Regional and District EBSA Offices are available through EBSA's website.) For more information about the Marketplace, visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

## **KEEP YOUR PLAN INFORMED OF ADDRESS CHANGES**

To protect your family's rights, let the Plan Administrator know about any changes in the addresses of family members. You should also keep a copy, for your records, of any notices you send to the Plan Administrator.

## PLAN CONTACT INFORMATION

*[Enter name of the Plan and name (or position), address and phone number of party or parties from whom information about the Plan and COBRA continuation coverage can be obtained on request.]*

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