

Frequently Asked Questions About Medical Benefits

Note: the information provided below is for general reference. The applicable Summary Plan Description (SPD) or Certificate of Coverage (CoC) should be consulted for more detailed information and answers for specific situations. In the event there is a discrepancy between information presented below and the SPD, the SPD or CoC language will determine the final answer.

Medical Benefits Coverage Prior to Retirement

Eligibility for Coverage When Working

Q: How many days must an employee work in a month to be eligible for benefits?

A: The “requisite amount of compensated service” is seven days. The seven days is determined by actual service rendered, vacation pay, or a combination of both.

Q: What if I don’t work enough in the month to be eligible for coverage?

A: If you don’t work the seven days in a month, there will be no coverage in the following month. For example, if you don’t work enough in January, there is no coverage for February. Seven days work in February will reestablish coverage, effective March 1.

Furlough & Dismissal

Q: How long does my insurance coverage last if I am furloughed?

A: Employee and eligible dependent coverage extends through the end of the fourth month following the month in which you last render compensated service. For example, an employee last rendering compensated service in January, who is then furloughed in February, will have coverage extended through the end of May.

Q: What if I am dismissed from service?

A: The coverage will be the same as above. The four months are measured from the date last worked, NOT the date of dismissal. For example, say an employee last worked in December, and an investigation is held in January and the employee is dismissed. Since December is the month last worked, coverage extends through the end of April.

Q: Will vacation pay extend coverage beyond four months in the above situations?

A: With regard to furlough – no. With regard to dismissal – yes, provided the vacation pay is received while the employee still has an employment relationship (vacation pay received in January prior to dismissal will extend coverage through May.)

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Disabled

Q: How long will my coverage extend if I become disabled and I can never return to my job due to my disability?

A: If you are unable to work in your regular occupation due to illness or injury, coverage for the employee and eligible dependent(s) will continue through the end of the year following the year in which the employee last rendered service or received vacation pay.

In addition, the employee (not dependents) will receive one more year of medical benefit coverage. NOTE – There is NO dental or vision benefit coverage for either the employee or dependents in the additional year of employee-only coverage.

Example – An employee last worked in March 2008. The dependent coverage will extend through the end of 2009, while the employee coverage will extend through the end of 2010.

NOTE – If the employee is able to return to his/her regular occupation due to the disability ending, the seven-day eligibility rule provisions again apply for subsequent months following the return to service.

Q: What if the railroad terminates the employee while off sick or injured?

A: The coverage will continue as stated above for as long as the employee continues to be unable to work in his/her regular occupation.

Q: Is there anything the employee needs to do in order to continue the uninterrupted coverage?

A: Yes. If the employee is unable to return to work within four months of the injury or illness due to the continuing disability, the employee MUST submit a “Proof of Disability” form, signed by the attending physician, to continue coverage.

Q: How do I obtain a “Proof of Disability” form?

A: Your physician should have a generic form for reporting disability. If not, you can obtain one in any of the following ways:

- Print the Proof of Disability form from the UTU Web site (click on the Healthcare link, scroll to bottom of the Benefit Provider Directory column, the click on the Proof of Disability Form).

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- Call the phone number on the back of your ID card and one will be mailed to you upon request.

Q: What if my doctor releases me for return to work, but the railroad refuses to do so?

A: In this instance, contact your local or general chairperson for assistance in returning to work. If the railroad delays your return to service into the next calendar month, contact the International headquarters for assistance in continuing uninterrupted coverage until the railroad allows you to mark-up for service.

COBRA Coverage

Q: Will I be able to continue coverage under COBRA when coverage for me and/or my dependents ends?

A: Under some circumstances, yes, but under other circumstances, no. The COBRA eligibility period (18, 29 or 36 months) is measured from the date of the “qualifying event.” For the health and welfare plans, the “qualifying event” is the date you last work, NOT the date your coverage ends.

The COBRA eligibility period, therefore, runs concurrently with the extended coverage as stated above so that COBRA continuation is available for the remaining months, if any, after the extended coverage ends.

- Example 1 – An employee is furloughed in January and coverage extends through May. COBRA continuation is available beginning June 1 and thereafter for an additional 13 months. In these circumstances, no more than 18 months of COBRA is available, less the five months during which the employee remained covered by the Plan after the qualifying event in January.
- Example 2 – An employee is disabled in January 2008. Dependent coverage extends through December 2009 (24 months) and employee coverage extends through December 2010 (36 months). In this instance, there would be no COBRA continuation available because the extended coverage provided by the Plans exceeds the 18-month COBRA available period, which starts in January 2008.

Q: How will I be notified that COBRA is available to me and/or my dependents?

A: When the railroad reports an employee as not being eligible for benefits, a COBRA notice is automatically sent to the employee’s address of record. The form must be completed and returned to UnitedHealthcare in a timely manner in order to establish COBRA coverage.

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Medical Benefits Coverage During Retirement

Early Retirement

Q: How early can I retire and still receive benefits under the Railroad Employees National Early Retirement Major Medical Benefit Plan (ERMA)?

A: You can retire at age 60, provided you have 30 years of service, and be eligible for coverage under GA-46000.

Q: When should I apply for my annuity?

A: You can apply for a 60/30 annuity for which you are eligible on or after the date you reach age 60, or 90 days prior to your 60th birthday.

You must continue working (or take vacation) into the month before the month in which you turn age 60.

On the day before your birthday, you must be covered, OTHER THAN BY COBRA, under the NRC/UTU Plan or the Railroad Employees National Health & Welfare Plan (GA-23000).

Q: What steps do I need to take when retiring?

A: The following steps outline the series of events that will occur:

- After meeting with the Railroad Retirement Board and determining your retirement date, call UnitedHealthcare at (800) 842-5252 and request the GA-46000 and GA-23111 Plan E coverage books and a COBRA form for extending your dental and vision benefit coverages.
- Mail the notification of retirement form in the center of the GA-46000 book, the application for GA-23111 Plan E and the COBRA form to the UnitedHealthcare address in Hartford, Conn., that is on each of the forms. The address is the same on all three forms, so they can be mailed together in one envelope. It takes approximately 30 days to enrolled for the retirement medical benefit plans.
- Payment for the first month for the Supplemental Plan E under GA-23111 can be mailed at the time of application.
- You will receive new ID cards for GA-46000, GA-23111 Plan E and Medco (for prescription coverage).

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- If you work or take vacation in the month you retire, you will have coverage under your active plan for the following month. For example, if you work in October and your retirement date is in October, you will remain covered under the active plan for November. The retirement plan begins December 1.
- The forms for retirement and the applications for GA-23111 Plan E and COBRA are available on the Railroad Information Depot web site at www.myuhc.com/groups/railroadinfo.

Q: What if I am out of work on disability before I turn 60?

A: Disabled employees may qualify for disability medical benefits if they become disabled when they are age 58 or 59 when they stop working. They must be covered under the active employees' plan when they turn age 60, and have 30 years of service, counting the period of disability. Vacation pay received after the year the disability begins extends coverage for the employee and his dependents as noted previously.

Q: Is there a supplemental plan available for early retirees?

A: Yes. GA-23111 Plan E is available to supplement the GA-46000 Plan. Those interested need to apply within four months of eligibility for GA-46000, or wait for an open enrollment period that is conducted in November and December of even-numbered calendar years.

Q: Does GA-46000 have prescription benefits?

A: Prescription coverage under GA-46000 is through Medco, the same company that provides prescription drug administration when you are actively working. Co-pays are \$2 and \$6 for retail prescriptions of 21 days or less, and \$5 for mail-order prescriptions up to a 90 day supply.

Q: Are there benefits for dental or vision coverage after retirement?

A: No. There is no coverage for vision or dental after retirement, unless you elect to extend coverage at your cost for up to 18 months through COBRA.

Q: When does early-retirement coverage end?

A: Coverage will terminate for all covered members when the employee turns 65. **GA-46000 does not cover anyone covered under Medicare.** If a spouse is older than the employee, then coverage under GA-46000 will terminate at age 65 for that dependent.

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Medicare Eligible Retirees

Q: If an employee becomes eligible for Medicare earlier than age 65, does all dependent coverage terminate?

A: If the employee is entitled to Medicare benefits prior to age 65, as determined by the RRB, and is eligible for or receiving coverage under GA-46000, then the employee coverage under GA-46000 ends and coverage will be provided under Medicare. (The employee may enroll for coverage under GA-23111 Plan F to supplement the Medicare coverage.)

However, coverage for dependents would be extended under GA-46000 and GA-23111 Plan E until the employee reaches age 65.

Q: What happens when a spouse loses coverage under GA-46000 because they are younger than the employee?

A: If a spouse is younger, he or she will have two options.

- They can continue coverage under GA-46000 plan through COBRA. This means they will now pay for the coverage that was previously provided at no cost to the employee and/or dependent(s). COBRA can be purchased for up to 36 months.

If the spouse turns age 65 within the 36-month period, they will become eligible for Medicare. If after the 36 months they are still not 65, they can apply for one of the Plans A/B/C under GA-23111.

- Another option is to purchase Plan A, B or C under GA-23111, instead of electing COBRA continuation.

Information about the benefits payable under GA-23111 Plans A, B and C can be found at: www.myuhc.com/groups/railroadinfo.