http://www.jdsupra.com/post/documentViewer.aspx?fid=051f57f1-0db3



#### Model COBRA Continuation Coverage Election Notice (For use by group health plans for qualified beneficiaries who have not yet received an election notice and with qualifying events occurring during the period that begins with September 1, 2008 and ends with December 31, 2009.)

[Enter date of notice]

Dear: [Identify the qualified beneficiary(ies), by name or status]

This notice contains important information about your right to continue your health care coverage in the [*enter name of group health plan*] (the Plan). Please read the information contained in this notice very carefully.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) reduces the COBRA premium in some cases. You are receiving this election notice because you experienced a loss of coverage that occurred during the period that begins with September 1, 2008 and ends with December 31, 2009 and you may be eligible for the temporary premium reduction for up to nine months. To help determine whether you can get the ARRA premium reduction, you should read this notice and the attached documents carefully. In particular, reference the "Summary of the COBRA Premium Reduction Provisions under ARRA" with details regarding eligibility, restrictions, and obligations and the "Application for Treatment as an Assistance Eligible Individual." If you believe you meet the criteria for the premium reduction, complete the "Application for Treatment as an Assistance Eligible Individual" and return it with your completed Election Form.

To elect COBRA continuation coverage, follow the instructions on the following pages to complete the enclosed Election Form and submit it to us.

If you do not elect COBRA continuation coverage, your coverage under the Plan will end on [*enter date*] due to [*check appropriate box(es)*]:

 $\Box$  End of employment

 $\Box$  Involuntary  $\Box$  Voluntary

- $\Box$  Divorce or legal separation
- $\Box$  Death of employee
- □ Entitlement to Medicare
- $\Box$  Reduction in hours of employment
- $\Box$  Loss of dependent child status

Each person ("qualified beneficiary") in the category(ies) checked below is entitled to elect COBRA continuation coverage, which will continue group health care coverage under the Plan for up to \_\_\_\_\_ months [*enter* 18 *or* 36, *as appropriate and check appropriate box or boxes; names may be added*]:

- $\Box$  Employee or former employee
- $\Box$  Spouse or former spouse
- □ Dependent child(ren) covered under the Plan on the day before the event that caused the loss of coverage
- □ Child who is losing coverage under the Plan because he or she is no longer a dependent under the Plan

If elected, COBRA continuation coverage will begin on [*enter date*] and can last until [*enter date*]. [*Add, if appropriate:* You may elect any of the following coverage options in which you are already enrolled for COBRA continuation coverage: [*list available coverage options*].]

[If the plan permits Assistance Eligible Individuals to elect to enroll in coverage that is different than coverage in which the individual was enrolled at the time the qualifying event occurred, insert: "To change the coverage option(s) for your COBRA continuation coverage to something different than what you had on the last day of employment, complete the "Form for Switching COBRA Continuation Coverage Benefit Options" and return it to us. Available coverage options are: [insert list of available coverage options]." The different coverage must cost the same or less than the coverage the individual had at the time of the qualifying event; be offered to active employees; and cannot be limited to only dental coverage, vision coverage, counseling coverage, a flexible spending arrangement (FSA), including a health reimbursement arrangement that qualifies as an FSA, or an on-site medical clinic. ]

COBRA continuation coverage will cost: [*enter amount each qualified beneficiary will be required to pay for each option per month of coverage and any other permitted coverage periods*]. If you qualify as an "Assistance Eligible Individual" this cost will be [*include the amount that the Assistance Eligible Individual is required to pay for each option*] for up to nine months. You do not have to send any payment with the Election Form. Important additional information about payment for COBRA continuation coverage is included in the pages following the Election Form.

If you have any questions about this notice or your rights to COBRA continuation coverage, you should contact [*enter name of party responsible for COBRA administration for the Plan, with telephone number and address*].

## **COBRA** Continuation Coverage Election Form

Instructions: To elect COBRA continuation coverage, complete this Election Form and return it to us. Under federal law, you have 60 days after the date of this notice to decide whether you want to elect COBRA continuation coverage under the Plan.

Send completed Election Form to: [Enter Name and Address]

This Election Form must be completed and returned by mail [or describe other means of submission and due date]. If mailed, it must be post-marked no later than [enter date].

If you do not submit a completed Election Form by the due date shown above, you will lose your right to elect COBRA continuation coverage. If you reject COBRA continuation coverage before the due date, you may change your mind as long as you furnish a completed Election Form before the due date. However, if you change your mind after first rejecting COBRA continuation coverage, your COBRA continuation coverage will begin on the date you furnish the completed Election Form.

Read the important information about your rights included in the pages after the Election Form.

I (We) elect COBRA continuation coverage in the [*enter name of plan*] (the Plan) as indicated below:

	Name	Date of Birth	Relationship to	o Employee	SSN (or other identifier)
a					
	[Add	if appropriate: Cove	erage option(s):		]
b.					
					]
c					
	[Add	if appropriate: Cove	erage option(s):		]
Sig	gnature			Date	
Pr	int Name			Relationship t	o individual(s) listed above
Pri	int Address	5		Telephone nur	mber

[Only use this model form if the plan permits Assistance Eligible Individuals to elect to enroll in coverage that is different than coverage in which the individual was enrolled at the time the qualifying event occurred.]

## Form for Switching COBRA Continuation Coverage Benefit Options

**Instructions:** To change the benefit option(s) for your COBRA continuation coverage to something different than what you had on the last day of employment, complete this form and return it to us. Under federal law, you have 90 days after the date of this notice to decide whether you want to switch benefit options.

Send completed form to: [Enter Name and Address]

This form must be completed and returned by mail [*or describe other means of submission and due date*]. If mailed, it must be post-marked no later than [*enter date*].

#### \*THIS IS NOT YOUR ELECTION NOTICE\* YOU MUST SEPARATELY COMPLETE AND RETURN THE ELECTION NOTICE TO SECURE YOUR COBRA CONTINUATION COVERAGE.

I (We) would like to change the COBRA continuation coverage option(s) in the [*enter name of plan*] (the Plan) as indicated below:

Name	Date of Birth	Relationship to Employee	SSN (or other identifier)
a			
New	Coverage Option:		
b			
New	Coverage Option:		
c			
Old	Coverage Option:		
New	Coverage Option:		
Signature		Date	
Print Name		Relationship	to individual(s) listed above
Print Addres	SS	Telephone nu	ımber

# Important Information About Your COBRA Continuation Coverage Rights

#### What is continuation coverage?

Federal law requires that most group health plans (including this Plan) give employees and their families the opportunity to continue their health care coverage when there is a "qualifying event" that would result in a loss of coverage under an employer's plan. Depending on the type of qualifying event, "qualified beneficiaries" can include the employee (or retired employee) covered under the group health plan, the covered employee's spouse, and the dependent children of the covered employee.

Continuation coverage is the same coverage that the Plan gives to other participants or beneficiaries under the Plan who are not receiving continuation coverage. Each qualified beneficiary who elects continuation coverage will have the same rights under the Plan as other participants or beneficiaries covered under the Plan, including [*add if applicable:* open enrollment and] special enrollment rights.

#### How long will continuation coverage last?

In the case of a loss of coverage due to end of employment or reduction in hours of employment, coverage generally may be continued only for up to a total of 18 months. In the case of losses of coverage due to an employee's death, divorce or legal separation, the employee's becoming entitled to Medicare benefits or a dependent child ceasing to be a dependent under the terms of the plan, coverage may be continued 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, 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. This notice shows the maximum period of continuation coverage available to the qualified beneficiaries.

Continuation coverage will be terminated before the end of the maximum period if:

- any required premium is not paid in full on time,
- a qualified beneficiary first becomes covered, after electing continuation coverage, under another group health plan that does not impose any preexisting condition exclusion for a preexisting condition of the qualified beneficiary,
- a qualified beneficiary first becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both) after electing continuation coverage, or
- the employer ceases to provide any group health plan for its employees.

Continuation coverage may also be terminated for any reason the Plan would terminate coverage of a participant or beneficiary not receiving continuation coverage (such as fraud).

[If the maximum period shown on page 1 of this notice is less than 36 months, add the following three paragraphs:]

#### How can you extend the length of COBRA continuation coverage?

If you elect continuation coverage, an extension of the maximum period of coverage may be available if a qualified beneficiary is disabled or a second qualifying event occurs. You must notify [*enter name of party responsible for COBRA administration*] of a disability or a second qualifying event in order to extend the period of continuation coverage. Failure to provide notice of a disability or second qualifying event may affect the right to extend the period of continuation coverage.

#### Disability

An 11-month extension of coverage may be available if any of the qualified beneficiaries is determined under the Social Security Act (SSA) to be disabled. The disability has to have started at some time on or before the 60th day of COBRA continuation coverage and must last at least until the end of the 18-month period of continuation coverage. [Describe Plan provisions for requiring notice of disability determination, including time frames and procedures.] Each qualified beneficiary who has elected continuation coverage will be entitled to the 11-month disability extension if one of them qualifies. If the qualified beneficiary is determined to no longer be disabled under the SSA, you must notify the Plan of that fact within 30 days after that determination.

#### Second Qualifying Event

An 18-month extension of coverage will be available to spouses and dependent children who elect continuation coverage if a second qualifying event occurs during the first 18 months of continuation coverage. The maximum amount of continuation coverage available when a second qualifying event occurs is 36 months. Such second qualifying events may include the death of a covered employee, divorce or legal separation from the covered employee, the covered employee's becoming entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both), or a dependent child's ceasing to be eligible for coverage as a dependent under the Plan. These events can be a second qualifying event only if they would have caused the qualified beneficiary to lose coverage under the Plan if the first qualifying event had not occurred. You must notify the Plan within 60 days after a second qualifying event occurs if you want to extend your continuation coverage.

#### How can you elect COBRA continuation coverage?

To elect continuation coverage, you must complete the Election Form and furnish it according to the directions on the form. Each qualified beneficiary has a separate right to elect continuation coverage. For example, the employee's spouse may elect continuation coverage even if the employee does not. Continuation coverage may be elected for only one, several, or for all dependent children who are qualified beneficiaries. A parent may elect to continue coverage on behalf of any dependent children. The employee or the employee's spouse can elect continuation coverage on behalf of all of the qualified beneficiaries.

In considering whether to elect continuation coverage, you should take into account that a failure to continue your group health coverage will affect your future rights under federal law. First, you can lose the right to avoid having preexisting condition exclusions applied to you by other group health plans if you have a 63-day gap in health coverage, and election of continuation coverage may help prevent such a gap. Second, you will lose the guaranteed right to purchase individual health

coverage that does not impose a preexisting condition exclusion if you do not elect continuation coverage for the maximum time available to you. Finally, you should take into account that you have special enrollment rights under federal law. You have the right to request special enrollment in another group health plan for which you are otherwise eligible (such as a plan sponsored by your spouse's employer) within 30 days after your group health coverage ends because of the qualifying event listed above. You will also have the same special enrollment right at the end of continuation coverage if you get continuation coverage for the maximum time available to you.

#### How much does COBRA continuation coverage cost?

Generally, each qualified beneficiary may be required to pay the entire cost of continuation coverage. The amount a qualified beneficiary may be required to pay may not exceed 102 percent (or, in the case of an extension of continuation coverage due to a disability, 150 percent) of the cost to the group health plan (including both employer and employee contributions) for coverage of a similarly situated plan participant or beneficiary who is not receiving continuation coverage. The required payment for each continuation coverage period for each option is described in this notice.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) reduces the COBRA premium in some cases. The premium reduction is available to certain individuals who experience a qualifying event that is an involuntary termination of employment during the period beginning with September 1, 2008 and ending with December 31, 2009. If you qualify for the premium reduction, you need only pay 35 percent of the COBRA premium otherwise due to the plan. This premium reduction is available for up to nine months. If your COBRA continuation coverage lasts for more than nine months, you will have to pay the full amount to continue your COBRA continuation coverage. See the attached "Summary of the COBRA Premium Reduction Provisions under ARRA" for more details, restrictions, and obligations as well as the form necessary to establish eligibility.

[*If employees might be eligible for trade adjustment assistance, the following information must be added*: The Trade Act of 2002 created a tax credit for certain individuals who become eligible for trade adjustment assistance and for certain retired employees who are receiving pension payments from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). Under the tax provisions, eligible individuals can either take a tax credit or get advance payment of 65% of premiums paid for qualified health insurance, including continuation coverage. ARRA made several amendments to these provisions, including an increase in the amount of the credit to 80% of premiums for coverage before January 1, 2011 and temporary extensions of the maximum period of COBRA continuation coverage for PBGC recipients (covered employees who have a nonforfeitable right to a benefit any portion of which is to be paid by the PBGC) and TAA-eligible individuals.

If you have questions about these provisions, you may call the Health Coverage Tax Credit Customer Contact Center toll-free at 1-866-628-4282. TTD/TTY callers may call toll-free at 1-866-626-4282. More information about the Trade Act is also available at <u>www.doleta.gov/tradeact</u>.]

#### When and how must payment for COBRA continuation coverage be made?

#### First payment for continuation coverage

If you elect continuation coverage, you do not have to send any payment with the Election Form. However, you must make your first payment for continuation coverage not later than 45 days after the date of your election. (This is the date the Election Notice is post-marked, if mailed.) If you do not make your first payment for continuation coverage in full not later than 45 days after the date of your election, you will lose all continuation coverage rights under the Plan. You are responsible for making sure that the amount of your first payment is correct. You may contact [*enter appropriate contact information, e.g., the Plan Administrator or other party responsible for COBRA administration under the Plan*] to confirm the correct amount of your first payment or to discuss payment issues related to the ARRA premium reduction.

#### Periodic payments for continuation coverage

After you make your first payment for continuation coverage, you will be required to make periodic payments for each subsequent coverage period. The amount due for each coverage period for each qualified beneficiary is shown in this notice. The periodic payments can be made on a monthly basis. Under the Plan, each of these periodic payments for continuation coverage is due on the [*enter due day for each monthly payment*] for that coverage period. [*If Plan offers other payment schedules, enter with appropriate dates:* You may instead make payments for continuation coverage for the following coverage periods, due on the following dates:]. If you make a periodic payment on or before the first day of the coverage period to which it applies, your coverage under the Plan will continue for that coverage period without any break. The Plan [*select one:* will *or* will not] send periodic notices of payments due for these coverage periods.

#### Grace periods for periodic payments

Although periodic payments are due on the dates shown above, you will be given a grace period of 30 days after the first day of the coverage period [*or enter longer period permitted by Plan*] to make each periodic payment. Your continuation coverage will be provided for each coverage period as long as payment for that coverage period is made before the end of the grace period for that payment. [*If Plan suspends coverage during grace period for nonpayment, enter and modify as necessary:* However, if you pay a periodic payment later than the first day of the coverage under the Plan will be suspended as of the first day of the coverage period and then retroactively reinstated (going back to the first day of the coverage period) when the periodic payment is received. This means that any claim you submit for benefits while your coverage is suspended may be denied and may have to be resubmitted once your coverage is reinstated.]

If you fail to make a periodic payment before the end of the grace period for that coverage period, you will lose all rights to continuation coverage under the Plan.

Your first payment and all periodic payments for continuation coverage should be sent to:

[enter appropriate payment address]

#### For more information

This notice does not fully describe continuation coverage or other rights under the Plan. More information about continuation coverage and your rights under the Plan is available in your summary plan description or from the Plan Administrator.

If you have any questions concerning the information in this notice, your rights to coverage, or if you want a copy of your summary plan description, you should contact [*enter name of party responsible for COBRA administration for the Plan, with telephone number and address*].

Private sector employees seeking more information about rights under ERISA, including COBRA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and other laws affecting group health plans, can contact the U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) at 1-866-444-3272 or visit the EBSA website at www.dol.gov/ebsa. State and local government employees should contact HHS-CMS at www.cms.hhs.gov/COBRAContinuationofCov/ or NewCobraRights@cms.hhs.gov.

#### Keep Your Plan Informed of Address Changes

In order to protect your and your family's rights, you should keep the Plan Administrator informed of any changes in your address and the addresses of family members. You should also keep a copy, for your records, of any notices you send to the Plan Administrator.



# Summary of the COBRA Premium Document hoster Reduction Provisions under ARRA

President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) on February 17, 2009. The law gives "Assistance Eligible Individuals" the right to pay reduced COBRA premiums for periods of coverage beginning on or after February 17, 2009 and can last up to 9 months.

To be considered an "Assistance Eligible Individual" and get reduced premiums you:

- MUST be eligible for continuation coverage at any time during the period from September 1, 2008 through December 31, 2009 and elect the coverage;
- MUST have a continuation coverage election opportunity related to an involuntary termination of employment that occurred at some time from September 1, 2008 through December 31, 2009;
- > MUST NOT be eligible for Medicare; AND
- MUST NOT be eligible for coverage under any other group health plan, such as a plan sponsored by a successor employer or a spouse's employer.\*

Individuals who experienced a qualifying event as the result of an involuntary termination of employment at any time from September 1, 2008 through February 16, 2009 and were offered, but did not elect, continuation coverage OR who elected continuation coverage and subsequently discontinued it may have the right to an additional 60-day election period.

### ♦ IMPORTANT ♦

- If, after you elect COBRA and while you are paying the reduced premium, you become eligible for other group health plan coverage or Medicare you MUST notify the plan in writing. If you do not, you may be subject to a tax penalty.
- Electing the premium reduction disqualifies you for the Health Coverage Tax Credit. If you are eligible for the Health Coverage Tax Credit, which could be more valuable than the premium reduction, you will have received a notification from the IRS.
- The amount of the premium reduction is recaptured for certain high income individuals. If the amount you earn for the year is more than \$125,000 (or \$250,000 for married couples filing a joint federal income tax return) all or part of the premium reduction may be recaptured by an increase in your income tax liability for the year. If you think that your income may exceed the amounts above, you may wish to consider waiving your right to the premium reduction. For more information, consult your tax preparer or visit the IRS webpage on ARRA at www.irs.gov.

For general information regarding your plan's COBRA coverage you can contact [*enter name of party responsible for COBRA administration for the Plan, with telephone number and address*].

For specific information related to your plan's administration of the ARRA Premium Reduction or to notify the plan of your ineligibility to continue paying reduced premiums, contact [*enter name of party responsible for ARRA Premium Reduction administration for the Plan, with telephone number and address*].

If you are denied treatment as an "Assistance Eligible Individual" you may have the right to have the denial reviewed. For more information regarding reviews or for general information about the ARRA Premium Reduction go to:

www.dol.gov/COBRA or call 1-866-444-EBSA (3272)

<sup>\*</sup> Generally, this does not include coverage for only dental, vision, counseling, or referral services; coverage under a health flexible spending arrangement; or treatment that is furnished in an on-site medical facility maintained by the employer.

To apply for ARRA Premi	um Reduction, complete this form and	return it to us along with you	u D <b>Edercti</b>		JPR/			
To apply for ARRA Premium Reduction, complete this form and return it to us along with your Elections For JDSUPRA http://www.jdsupra.com/post/documentViewer.aspx?fid=051f57f1-0db3-45f0-8bde-18ecb2ccfdf You may also send this form in separately. If you choose to do so, send the completed "Request for Treatment								
as an Assistance Eligible Individual" to: [Enter Name and Address]								
You may also want to read the important information about your rights included in the "Summary of the COBRA Premium Reduction Provisions Under ARRA."								
[Insert Plan Name] REQUEST FOR TREATMENT AS AN ASSISTANCE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL [Insert Plan Mailing Address]								
PERSONAL INFORMATION								
Name and mailing address of employee (list any dependents on the back of this form)								
	E-mail address (optional)							
То	qualify, you must be able to check	'Yes' for all statements.*						
1. The loss of employment was				□ Yes□ No	)			
· · ·	rred at some point on or after September 1, 20	08 and on or before December 31	1, 2009.	□ Yes□ No				
3. I elected (or am electing) COI	ő			□ Yes□ No				
<ol> <li>I am NOT eligible for other gr during the period for which I am</li> </ol>	oup health plan coverage (or I was not eligible claiming a reduced premium).	for other group health plan covera	age	□ Yes□ No	)			
	e (or I was not eligible for Medicare during the	period for which I am claiming a r	educed	□ Yes□ No	)			
	ent 3, you may still be eligible. See below f	or more information.						
	*ADDITIONAL ELECTION	I PERIOD*						
and you were eligible for, but did not elect, COBRA continuation coverage <b>OR</b> you elected but subsequently discontinued COBRA, you may have the right to an additional 60-day election period. You should receive a new election notice with an Election Form which you MUST complete and return. If you believe you should have received this additional notice but have not, contact [ <i>enter name of party responsible for COBRA administration for the Plan, with telephone number and address</i> ].								
Signature		Date 🔸		_				
Type or print name	Re	elationship to employee _→						
FOR EMPLOYER OR PLAN USE ONLY This application is:  Approved Denied Denied Approved for some/denied for others (explain in #4 below) Specify reason below and then return a copy of this form to the applicant. REASON FOR DENIAL OF TREATMENT AS AN ASSISTANCE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL								
1. Loss of employment was volu		04,0000						
<ol> <li>The involuntary loss did not o</li> <li>Individual did not elect COBR</li> </ol>	ccur between September 1, 2008 and Decemb	ber 31, 2009.						
4. Other (please explain)								
*If you checked number 3, was individual eligible for, and given, the Additional Election Period described above?								
Signature of employer, plan administrator, or other party responsible for COBRA administration for the Plan								
→ Date →								
Type or print name	Type or print name							
		s <u>→</u>						

Name	Date of Birth	Relationship to Employee SSN (or other identifier)	
l			
	am electing) COBRA cont	5	
	igible for other group healt igible for Medicare.	n plan coverage.	□ Yes□ No □ Yes□ No
	tion to exercise my right to on this form are true and c	the ARRA Premium Reduction. To the best of my knowledge and belief all correct.	of the answers I
Signature 👌	•	Date >	
ype or print na	ame 🎽	Relationship to employee _>	
Name	Date of Birth	Relationship to Employee SSN (or other identifier)	
)			
			□ Yes□ No
	am electing) COBRA cont		
. I am NOT eli . I am NOT eli make an elect	igible for other group healt igible for Medicare.	h plan coverage.	□ Yes□ No □ Yes□ No
2. I am NOT eli 3. I am NOT eli make an elect ave provided Signature	igible for other group healt igible for Medicare. tion to exercise my right to on this form are true and c	h plan coverage.	☐ Yes☐ No ☐ Yes☐ No of the answers I
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Document hosted at JDSUPRA							
This form is designed for plans to distribute to COBRA qualified beneficiaries who are paying reduced premiones 2ccfdf pursuant to ARRA so they can notify the plan if they become eligible for other group health plan coverage or Medicare.							
Use this form to notify your plan that you are eligible for other group health plan coverage or Medicare and therefore not eligible for reduced premiums under ARRA.							
Plan Name Plan N					Mailing Address		
PERSONAL INFORMATION	ON			1			
Name and mailing address			Telephone number				
			E-mail address (optional)				
PREMIUM REDUCTION IN		I MATION –	Check one				
I am eligible for coverage under and If any dependents are also eligible, inclu							
Insert date you became eligible							
I am eligible for Medicare.							
Insert date you became eligible							
	IMP	PORTANT					
If you fail to notify your plan of becoming eligible for other group health plan coverage or Medicare AND continue to pay reduced COBRA premiums you could be subject to a fine of 110% of the amount of the premium reduction.							
	Eligibility is determined regardless of whether you take or decline the other coverage.						
However, eligi	ibility for coverage does I	not include	any time spent in a waiting	period.			
To the best of my knowledge and be	elief all of the answers I have	provided on th	nis Form are true and correct.				
Signature -> Date ->					_		
Type or print name <u>→</u>							
If you are eligible for coverage names here:	under another group healtl	h plan and th	nat plan covers dependents y	vou must a	also list their		
					-		
					-		