

Qualifying Event ABCs

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1. What is a Qualifying Event? A qualifying event is an IRS regulated process that allows employees to change insurance coverages and/or spending accounts at times other than hire and Open Enrollment. There are very specific (IRS) events that allow this change:

- marriage, divorce, qualified partner, legal separation (done through the courts)
- birth or adoption of a child
- death of a family member
- a child attaining age 19 (if no longer a FT student) or age 25
- child over age 19 who is no longer a FT college student
- change in Medicare or Medicaid coverage status
- change in spouse's or partner's employment status
- to coordinate with spouse's or partner's Open Enrollment
- employee beginning or ending a second job
- change in Day Care provider
- employee changing CMH status (PT, RPT, FT)

2. When must a Qualifying Event Form be completed? It is required that an employee making a change due to a Qualifying Event do so within one month of the event. For example, if a spouse ends a job on March 15th, the employee has from February 15th to April 15th to complete the paperwork. If the spouse begins another job in June 6th, the employee has from May 6th to July 6th to do another Qualifying Event form.

3. What date will insurance change? The insurance coverage will coincide with the date of the qualifying event. If it is determined there is an additional waiting period (i.e. your spouse starts a new job that requires 90 days of employment before insurance begins), the effective date will be adjusted to complement the other coverage.

4. What coverage can change? Changes made during a Qualifying Event window must be related to the event. For example, the birth of a child allows you to add your baby onto your medical insurance but you could not begin vision coverage for the family at that time.

5. How are newborns handled? The effective date for coverage of newborns is the date of birth (or adoption). Premiums are charged as if coverage were to begin the first of the month following the birth/adoption. The 30-day requirement for completing the Qualifying Event form remains in effect.

6. When do payroll deductions change? As deductions are withheld the month they are due, an employee adding coverage will notice the change in deductions the month following the effective date. If an employee is dropping coverage, depending on the timing of the paperwork, it is possible to be behind or ahead on deductions. HR will coordinate with Payroll to be sure deductions are correct.

7. Children coverage ends at what age? Children may remain on a parent's contract until the end of the month of their 19th birthday - regardless of student status. Children over age 19 may remain on the plans as long as they remain full-time college students or qualify as handicapped dependents (appear on parents' tax return). Regardless of student or handicap status, all insurance coverage ends the end of the month of a child's 25th birthday.

8. If I know my status is changing, should I call HR? Not immediately. Once Human Resources has processed the form to indicate your change in status, they will invite you (through inter-office mail) to schedule an appointment with HR to prepare the enrollment or qualifying event form. If you haven't heard from Human Resources a couple weeks after the change in status, please call HR to follow up.

9. Can a Qualifying Event trigger a COBRA event? Possibly. The term COBRA denotes a federal regulation that allows previously covered people the ability to remain on the group plan (medical and/or dental) by paying the group rates. Divorce and over-age children are common examples that trigger COBRA notices. The same "one month notice requirement" applies to these situations. If this is the case, be sure HR knows the forwarding address for the affected person.

10. What if I miss the 30-day window and do not file a Qualifying Event form? Coverage will be delayed until the next Open Enrollment period (unless there is

another Qualifying Event later in that same year).