



March 21, 2020

Re: Actions to help Oregonians keep Health Insurance in Response to the Coronavirus

Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response

Layoffs, furloughs and temporary business closures may cause many Oregonians to lose their health insurance at a time when they need it most. In response, the Oregon Association of Health Underwriters recommends a number of steps to help individuals and businesses maintain their health insurance.

- Extend grace periods for late payment
- Delay renewals for small business (without changing their effective date). So, for example, if company A's group plan is scheduled to renew on May 1, that renewal could be delayed for 60 days, or until the crisis subsides. Even if the renewal is postponed, the company's renewal date going forward would remain May 1. The concern is that if this happens, we don't want to push more and more renewals into the fall when agents are already slammed.
- Allow employers that offer more than one plan to shift employees to the lower-cost plan.
- Allow a 90-day window of flexibility — based on the leave-of-absence provision in existing contracts — to maintain coverage for employees who have been laid off or had their hours reduced.
- Allow laid-off workers, who lose group coverage, to enroll in individual plans up to the last day of the month with an effective date the 1st of the month following the date of application.
- Ask carriers to keep a company's group plan open even if, because of layoffs, they have no members enrolled. This would allow companies to re-enroll employees when they restart operations without having to go through the process of creating a new group.

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