

COBRA Operational Tips FAQ

Q. How many unemployment claims have been submitted?

A. As of March 21, 2020, 3.3 million claims had been filed. As of March 28, 2020, there were 6.6 million claims filed.

Q. Are these COBRA qualifying events?

A. They can be. A qualifying event is defined as an employee who was enrolled on a group health plan(s) through their employer and has lost group health coverage due to an event such as termination or reduction in hours.

Q. What does an increase in qualifying events look like to an administrator?

1. Increased qualifying events being entered into the system
2. Increased mail activity and costs
3. Increased call volumes with questions about the COBRA Specific Rights Notice or questions about how to enroll
4. If Qualified Beneficiaries choose to enroll, increased payment processing volumes
5. Increased volumes in carrier notifications and eligibility reporting

Q. What can an administrator do to mitigate these increases?

1. Utilize the File Import Specifications, located under the Help Menu. There you will find file import specifications to support adding and updating member records and adding payments. Utilize File Webservices to load your file import(s). Contact your Partner Account Executive for more information about this.
2. Ensure your members have access to their member portal or they get registered for the member portal. This will allow them to process their election, make payments online, and view their letters. Members can also perform these same actions using the mobile app. Contact your Partner Account Executive for more information.
3. Partners can utilize Carrier Notification Email to remove the administrative burden of sending PDF Carrier Notifications for eligibility. The email notice will be sent automatically for all eligibility.

Q. As an employer can I pay for my qualified beneficiaries' premiums?

A. Yes. This can be done by subsidizing their premium and entering a subsidy.

Q. Can the online Convenience Fee be changed for members?

A. Yes, it can. The convenience fee can be changed at the Administrator and Employer Level. Contact your Partner Account Executive if you would like to have this done.

Q. If furloughs are offered, is that a COBRA event?

A. If an employee does not experience a loss of coverage due to a reduction in hours or termination, there is no COBRA event.

Q. Are there any alternatives to COBRA coverage?

A. GoHealth is an insurance alternative that can be offered to members. There is separate contact information for GoHealth that can be included in the COBRA Specific Rights notice. It is the responsibility of the member to contact GoHealth for more options.

Q. What does the Direct Bill member type do?

A. The SPM or Direct Bill member type provides the ability to collect money from a member. This billing type is not COBRA and was not a result of a loss of coverage. For example, if employee benefit contributions need to be collected and there is no paycheck this can be done using the direct bill member.

Q. If an employer is under 20 active employees and does state continuation can that be done through the COBRA Direct Bill system?

A. Yes. State continuation can be administered through the platform. The letters can be customized to reflect state continuation versus COBRA continuation. Letters can be customized at the Client Group, Client, and Client Division levels. Continuation values such as length of coverage, election grace period, and payment grace periods can be edited at the Client Group, Client, and Member levels.

Q. What configurations are available in the system to assist qualified beneficiaries?

A. The election grace period can be extended to allow for more time to elect. The initial and subsequent payment grace periods can be extended to allow for more time to pay and to prevent termination.

For more questions contact your Partner Service Manger or your Partner Account Executive.

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