

2026 Annual Notices

Information about your rights and options

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Medicare Part D Notice

This notice explains your options for accessing prescription drug coverage if you are eligible for Medicare.

Important Notice from Helena Public Schools About Your Prescription Drug Coverage and Medicare

Please read this notice carefully and keep it where you can find it. This notice has information about your current prescription drug coverage with Helena Public Schools and about your options under Medicare's prescription drug coverage. This information can help you decide whether or not you want to join a Medicare drug plan. If you are considering joining, you should compare your current coverage, including which drugs are covered at what cost, with the coverage and costs of the plans offering Medicare prescription drug coverage in your area. Information about where you can get help to make decisions about your prescription drug coverage is at the end of this notice.

There are two important things you need to know about your current coverage and Medicare's prescription drug coverage:

1. Medicare prescription drug coverage became available in 2006 to everyone with Medicare. You can get this coverage if you join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or join a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO) that offers prescription drug coverage. All Medicare drug plans provide at least a standard level of coverage set by Medicare. Some plans may also offer more coverage for a higher monthly premium.
2. Helena Public Schools has determined that the prescription drug coverage offered by the following plans are, on average for all plan participants, expected to pay out as much as standard Medicare prescription drug coverage pays and is therefore considered Creditable Coverage.
 - Bridged Health Alliance Healthcare Plan 1
 - Bridged Health Alliance Healthcare Plan 2

Because your existing coverage is Creditable Coverage, you can keep this coverage and not pay a higher premium (a penalty) if you later decide to join a Medicare drug plan.

When Can You Join A Medicare Drug Plan?

You can join a Medicare drug plan when you first become eligible for Medicare and each year from October 15th to December 7th.

However, if you lose your current creditable prescription drug coverage, through no fault of your own, you will also be eligible for a two (2) month Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to join a Medicare drug plan.

What Happens To Your Current Coverage If You Decide to Join A Medicare Drug Plan?

If you decide to join a Medicare drug plan, your Helena Public Schools coverage will not be affected. See below for more information about what happens to your current coverage if you join a Medicare drug plan. Since the existing prescription drug coverage under Bridged Health Alliance Healthcare Plan 1 and Bridged Health Alliance Healthcare Plan 2 are creditable (e.g., as good as Medicare coverage), you can retain your existing prescription drug coverage and choose not to enroll in a Part D plan; or you can enroll in a Part D plan as a supplement to, or in lieu of, your existing prescription drug coverage.

If you do decide to join a Medicare drug plan and drop your Helena Public Schools prescription drug coverage, be aware that you and your dependents can only get this coverage back at open enrollment or if you experience an event that gives rise to a HIPAA Special Enrollment Right.

When Will You Pay A Higher Premium (Penalty) To Join A Medicare Drug Plan?

You should also know that if you drop or lose your current coverage with Helena Public Schools and don't join a Medicare drug plan within 63 continuous days after your current coverage ends, you may pay a higher premium (a penalty) to join a Medicare drug plan later.

If you go 63 continuous days or longer without creditable prescription drug coverage, your monthly premium may go up by at least 1% of the Medicare base beneficiary premium per month for every month that you did not have that coverage. For example, if you go nineteen months without creditable coverage, your premium may consistently be at least 19% higher than the Medicare base beneficiary premium. You may have to pay this higher premium (a penalty) as long as you have Medicare prescription drug coverage. In addition, you may have to wait until the following October to join.

For More Information About This Notice Or Your Current Prescription Drug Coverage...

Contact the person listed below for further information. **NOTE:** You'll get this notice each year. You will also get it before the next period you can join a Medicare drug plan, and if this coverage through Helena Public Schools changes. You also may request a copy of this notice at any time.

For More Information About Your Options Under Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage ...

More detailed information about Medicare plans that offer prescription drug coverage is in the "Medicare & You" handbook. You'll get a copy of the handbook in the mail every year from Medicare. You may also be contacted directly by Medicare drug plans.

For more information about Medicare prescription drug coverage:

- Visit [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov).
- Call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (see the inside back cover of your copy of the "Medicare & You" handbook for their telephone number) for personalized help.
- Call 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227). TTY users should call 877-486-2048.

If you have limited income and resources, extra help paying for Medicare prescription drug coverage is available. For information about this extra help, visit Social Security on the web at [socialsecurity.gov](https://www.socialsecurity.gov), or call them at 800-772-1213 (TTY 800-325-0778).

Remember: Keep this Creditable Coverage notice. If you decide to join one of the Medicare drug plans, you may be required to provide a copy of this notice when you join to show whether or not you have maintained creditable coverage and, therefore, whether or not you are required to pay a higher premium (a penalty).

Date: 10/1/2026
Name of Entity/Sender: Keri Mizell
Contact-Position/Office: Human Resources Director
Address: 1325 Poplar St, Helena Montana, 59601
Phone Number: (406) 324-2014

Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act

This notice describes benefits available to people who have had or will have a mastectomy.

If you have had or are going to have a mastectomy, you may be entitled to certain benefits under the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998 (WHCRA). For individuals receiving mastectomy-related benefits, coverage will be provided in a manner determined in consultation with the attending physician and the patient, for:

- All stages of reconstruction of the breast on which the mastectomy was performed;
- Surgery and reconstruction of the other breast to produce a symmetrical appearance;
- Prostheses; and
- Treatment of physical complications of the mastectomy, including lymphedema.

These benefits will be provided subject to the same deductibles and coinsurance applicable to other medical and surgical benefits provided under this plan. If you would like more information on WHCRA benefits, call your plan administrator (800) 464-4000.

Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act

This notice explains the rights of mothers and newborns to stay in the hospital 48–96 hours after delivery.

Group health plans and health insurance issuers generally may not, under Federal law, restrict benefits for any hospital length of stay in connection with childbirth for the mother or newborn child to less than 48 hours following a vaginal delivery, or less than 96 hours following a cesarean section. However, Federal law generally does not prohibit the mother's or newborn's attending provider, after consulting with the mother, from discharging the mother or her newborn earlier than 48 hours (or 96 hours as applicable). In any case, plans and issuers may not, under Federal law, require that a provider obtain authorization from the plan or the insurance issuer for prescribing a length of stay not in excess of 48 hours (or 96 hours). If you would like more information on maternity benefits, call your plan administrator at (800) 464-4000.

HIPAA Notice of Special Enrollment Rights

This notice explains when you and/or your dependents can enroll in medical coverage outside of the annual open enrollment period.

If you decline enrollment in Helena Public Schools's health plan for you or your dependents (including your spouse) because of other health insurance or group health plan coverage, you or your dependents may be able to enroll in Helena Public Schools's health plan without waiting for the next open enrollment period if you:

- Lose other health insurance or group health plan coverage. You must request enrollment within 30 days after the loss of other coverage.
- Gain a new dependent as a result of marriage, birth, adoption, or placement for adoption. You must request health plan enrollment within [30/31] days after the marriage, birth, adoption, or placement for adoption.
- Lose Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage because you are no longer eligible. You must request medical plan enrollment within 60 days after the loss of such coverage.

If you request a change due to a special enrollment event within the 30 day timeframe, coverage will be effective the date of birth, adoption or placement for adoption. For all other events, coverage will be effective the first of the month following your request for enrollment. In addition, you may enroll in Helena Public Schools's health plan if you become eligible for a state premium assistance program under Medicaid or CHIP. You must request enrollment within 60 days after you gain eligibility for medical plan coverage. If you request this change, coverage will be effective the first of the month following your request for enrollment. Specific restrictions may apply, depending on federal and state law.

Note: If your dependent becomes eligible for a special enrollment right, you may add the dependent to your current coverage or change to another health plan. Any other currently covered dependents may also switch to the new plan in which you enroll.

Availability of Privacy Practices Notice

This notice explains how to access the HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices, which describes how health information about you may be used and disclosed.

We maintain the HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices for Bridged Health Alliance Healthcare Plan 1 and Bridged Health Alliance Healthcare Plan 2 describing how health information about you may be used and disclosed. You may obtain a copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices by contacting your Human Resource Director

Michelle's Law

This notice describes the right to extend dependent medical coverage during a student leave of absence.

The Bridged Health Alliance Healthcare Plan 1 and Bridged Health Alliance Healthcare Plan 2 plan may extend medical coverage for dependent children if they lose eligibility for coverage because of a medically necessary leave of absence from school. Coverage may continue for up to a year, unless your child's eligibility would end earlier for another reason.

Extended coverage is available if a child's leave of absence from school—or change in school enrollment status (for example, switching from full-time to part-time status)—starts while the child has a serious illness or injury, is medically necessary and otherwise causes eligibility for student coverage under the plan to end. Written certification from the child's physician stating that the child suffers from a serious illness or injury and the leave of absence is medically necessary may be required.

If your child will lose eligibility for coverage because of a medically necessary leave of absence from school and you want his or her coverage to be extended, notify your Human Resource Director in writing as soon as the need for the leave is recognized. In addition, contact your child's health plan to see if any state laws requiring extended coverage may apply to his or her benefits.

ACA Disclaimer

This notice explains how insurance offered by Helena Public Schools affects your eligibility for premium subsidies through the ACA Exchange.

This offer of coverage may disqualify you from receiving government subsidies for an Exchange plan even if you choose not to enroll. To be subsidy eligible you would have to establish that this offer is unaffordable for you, meaning that the required contribution for employee only coverage under our base plan exceeds 9.96% of your modified adjusted household income in 2026.

The ‘No Surprises’ Rules

This notice explains rules that protect you from unexpected large medical bills and limits on out-of-network charges for certain services.

The “No Surprises” rules protect you from surprise medical bills in situations where you can’t easily choose a provider who’s in your health plan network. This is especially common in an emergency situation, when you may get care from out-of-network providers. Out-of-network providers or emergency facilities may ask you to sign a notice and consent form before providing certain services after you’re no longer in need of emergency care. These are called “post-stabilization services.” You shouldn’t get this notice and consent form if you’re getting emergency services other than post-stabilization services. You may also be asked to sign a notice and consent form if you schedule certain non-emergency services with an out-of-network provider at an in-network hospital or ambulatory surgical center.

The notice and consent form informs you about your protections from unexpected medical bills, gives you the option to give up those protections and pay more for out-of-network care, and provides an estimate of what your out-of-network care might cost. You aren’t required to sign the form and shouldn’t sign the form if you didn’t have a choice of health care provider or facility before scheduling care. If you don’t sign, you may have to reschedule your care with a provider or facility in your health plan’s network.

[View a sample notice and consent form](#) (PDF).

This applies to you if you’re a participant, beneficiary, enrollee, or covered individual in a group health plan or group or individual health insurance coverage, including a Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plan.

Premium Assistance Under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

This notice describes premium assistance that may be available in your state for Medicaid-eligible dependents.

If you or your children are eligible for Medicaid or CHIP and you're eligible for health coverage from your employer, your state may have a premium assistance program that can help pay for coverage, using funds from their Medicaid or CHIP programs. If you or your children aren't eligible for Medicaid or CHIP, you won't be eligible for these premium assistance programs but you may be able to buy individual insurance coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace. For more information, visit www.healthcare.gov/.

If you or your dependents are already enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP and you live in a State listed below, contact your State Medicaid or CHIP office to find out if premium assistance is available.

If you or your dependents are NOT currently enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP, and you think you or any of your dependents might be eligible for either of these programs, contact your State Medicaid or CHIP office or dial **1-877-KIDS NOW** or www.insurekidsnow.gov to find out how to apply. If you qualify, ask your state if it has a program that might help you pay the premiums for an employer-sponsored plan.

If you or your dependents are eligible for premium assistance under Medicaid or CHIP, as well as eligible under your employer plan, your employer must allow you to enroll in your employer plan if you aren't already enrolled. This is called a "special enrollment" opportunity, and **you must request coverage within 60 days of being determined eligible for premium assistance**. If you have questions about enrolling in your employer plan, contact the Department of Labor at www.askebsa.dol.gov or call **1-866-444-EBSA (3272)**.

If you live in one of the following states, you may be eligible for assistance paying your employer health plan premiums. The following list of states is current as of January 31, 2026. Contact your State for more information on eligibility.

Alabama – Medicaid

Website: myalhipp.com

Phone: (855) 692-5447

Alaska – Medicaid

The AK Health Insurance Premium Payment Program

Website: myakhipp.com

Phone: (866) 251-4861

Email: CustomerService@MyAKHIPP.com

Medicaid eligibility:

health.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/default.aspx

Arkansas – Medicaid

Website: myarhipp.com

Phone: (855) MyARHIPP (692-7447)

California – Medicaid

Health Insurance Premium Payment (HIPP) Program

website: dhcs.ca.gov/hipp

Phone: (916) 445-8322

Email: hipp@dhcs.ca.gov

Fax: (916) 440-5676

Colorado – Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) & Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+)

Health First Colorado website:

healthfirstcolorado.com

Health First Colorado Member Contact Center: (800) 221-3943 (TTY: 711)

CHP+: hcpf.colorado.gov/child-health-plan-plus

CHP+ Customer Service: (800) 359-1991 (TTY: 711)

Health Insurance Buy-In Program (HIBI):

mycohibi.com

HIBI Customer Service: (855) 692-6442

Florida – Medicaid

Website:

flmedicaidtplrecovery.com/flmedicaidtplrecovery.com/hipp

Phone: (877) 357-3268

Georgia – Medicaid

GA HIPP Website: medicaid.georgia.gov/health-insurance-premium-payment-program-hipp

Phone: (678) 564-1162, press 1

GA CHIPRA Website:

medicaid.georgia.gov/programs/third-party-liability/childrens-health-insurance-program-reauthorization-act-2009-chipra

Phone: (678) 564-1162, press 2

Indiana – Medicaid

Health Insurance Premium Payment Program

All other Medicaid

Website: in.gov/medicaid

Website: in.gov/fssa/dfr

Family and Social Services Administration

Phone: (800) 403-0864

Member Services phone: (800) 457-4584

Iowa – Medicaid and CHIP (Hawki)

Medicaid website: hhs.iowa.gov/programs/welcome-iowa-medicaid

Medicaid phone: (800) 338-8366

Hawki website: hhs.iowa.gov/programs/welcome-iowa-medicaid/iowa-health-link/hawki

Hawki Phone: (800) 257-8563

HIPP website: hhs.iowa.gov/programs/welcome-iowa-medicaid/fee-service/hipp

HIPP Phone: (888) 346-9562

Kansas – Medicaid

Website: kancare.ks.gov

Phone: (800) 792-4884

HIPP Phone: (800) 967-4660

Kentucky – Medicaid

Kentucky Integrated Health Insurance Premium Payment Program (KI-HIPP) website:

chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dms/member/Pages/kihhipp.aspx

Phone: (855) 459-6328

Email: KIHIPPPROGRAM@ky.gov

KCHIP website: kynect.ky.gov

Phone: (877) 524-4718

Medicaid website: chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dms

Louisiana – Medicaid

Louisiana Medicaid website: ldh.la.gov/healthy-louisiana

Medicaid Customer Service Line: (888) 342-6207

Louisiana Medicaid email: healthy@la.gov

Louisiana Health Insurance Premium Program

(LaHIPP) Website: ldh.la.gov/lahipp

LaHIPP phone: (877) 697-6703

LaHIPP email: La.HIPP@la.gov

LaHIPP fax: (888) 716-9787

LaHIPP mailing address: 100 Crescent Centre Parkway, Suite 1000, Tucker, GA 30084

Maine – Medicaid

Enrollment website:

mymaineconnection.gov/benefits

Phone: (800) 442-6003 (TTY: 711)

Private Health Insurance Premium webpage:

maine.gov/dhhs/ofi/applications-forms

Phone: (800) 977-6740 (TTY: 711)

Massachusetts – Medicaid and CHIP

Website: mass.gov/masshealth/pa

Phone: (800) 862-4840 (TTY: 711)

Email: masspremassistance@accenture.com

Minnesota – Medicaid

Website: mn.gov/dhs/health-care-coverage/

Phone: (800) 657-3672

Missouri – Medicaid

Website: mydss.mo.gov/mhd/healthcare

Phone: (573) 751-2005

Montana – Medicaid

Website:

dphhs.mt.gov/MontanaHealthcarePrograms/HIPP

Phone: (800) 694-3084

Email: HHSHIPPPProgram@mt.gov

Nebraska – Medicaid

Website: ACCESSNebraska.ne.gov

Phone: (855) 632-7633

Lincoln: (402) 473-7000

Omaha: (402) 595-1178

Nevada – Medicaid

Medicaid website: dhcfp.nv.gov

Medicaid phone: (800) 992-0900

New Hampshire – Medicaid

Website: dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/medicaid/health-insurance-premium-program

Phone: (603) 271-5218

Toll free number for the HIPPA program: (800) 852-3345, ext. 15218

Email: DHHS.ThirdPartyLiabi@dhhs.nh.gov

New Jersey – Medicaid and CHIP

Medicaid website:

state.nj.us/humanservices/dmahs/clients/medicaid

Phone: (800) 356-1561

CHIP Premium Assistance Phone: (609) 631-2392

CHIP website: njfamilycare.org/index.html

CHIP phone: (800) 701-0710 (TTY: 711)

New York – Medicaid

Website: health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid

Phone: (800) 541-2831

North Carolina – Medicaid

Website: medicaid.ncdhhs.gov

Phone: (919) 855-4100

North Dakota – Medicaid

Website: hhs.nd.gov/healthcare

Phone: (866) 614-6005

Oklahoma – Medicaid and CHIP

Website: insureoklahoma.org

Phone: (888) 365-3742

Oregon – Medicaid and CHIP

Website: healthcare.oregon.gov

Phone: (800) 699-9075

Pennsylvania – Medicaid and CHIP

Website: pa.gov/en/services/dhs/apply-for-medicaid-health-insurance-premium-payment-program-hipp.html

Phone: (800) 692-7462

CHIP website: dhs.pa.gov/CHIP/Pages/CHIP.aspx

CHIP phone: (800) 986-KIDS (5437)

Rhode Island – Medicaid and CHIP

Website: eohhs.ri.gov

Phone: (855) 697-4347 or (401) 462-0311 (Direct Rlte Share Line)

South Carolina – Medicaid

Website: scdhhs.gov

Phone: (888) 549-0820

South Dakota – Medicaid

Website: dss.sd.gov

Phone: (888) 828-0059

Texas – Medicaid

Website: hhs.texas.gov/services/financial/health-insurance-premium-payment-hipp-program

Phone: (800) 440-0493

Utah – Medicaid and CHIP

Utah's Premium Partnership for Health Insurance (UPP) website: medicaid.utah.gov/upp

Phone: (888) 222-2542

Email: upp@utah.gov

Adult Expansion website:

medicaid.utah.gov/expansion

Utah Medicaid Buyout Program website:

medicaid.utah.gov/buyout-program

CHIP website: chip.utah.gov

Vermont – Medicaid

Website: dvha.vermont.gov/members/medicaid/hipp-program

Phone: (800) 250-8427

Virginia – Medicaid and CHIP

Website: coverva.dmas.virginia.gov/learn/premium-assistance/famis-select

Website: coverva.dmas.virginia.gov/learn/premium-assistance/health-insurance-premium-payment-hipp-programs

Medicaid/CHIP phone: (800) 432-5924

Washington – Medicaid

Website: hca.wa.gov

Phone: (800) 562-3022

West Virginia – Medicaid and CHIP

Website: dhhr.wv.gov/bms

Website: mywvhipp.com

Medicaid phone: (304) 558-1700

CHIP toll-free phone: (855) MyWVHIPPA (699-8447)

Wisconsin – Medicaid and CHIP

Website: dhs.wisconsin.gov/badgercareplus/p-10095.htm

Phone: (800) 362-3002

Wyoming – Medicaid

Website: health.wyo.gov/healthcarefin/medicaid/programs-and-eligibility/

Phone: (800) 251-1269

To see if any other states have added a premium assistance program since January 31, 2026, or for more information on special enrollment rights, contact either:

U.S. Department of Labor
Employee Benefits Security Administration

www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa

1-866-444-EBSA (3272)

U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services Centers for Medicare & Medicaid
Services

www.cms.hhs.gov

1-877-267-2323, Menu Option 4, Ext. 61565

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) (PRA), no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The Department notes that a Federal agency cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it is approved by OMB under the PRA, and displays a currently valid OMB control number, and the public is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3507. Also, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no person shall be subject to penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if the collection of information does not display a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3512.

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average approximately seven minutes per respondent. Interested parties are encouraged to send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Office of Policy and Research, Attention: PRA Clearance Officer, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room N-5718, Washington, DC 20210 or email ebsa.opr@dol.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1210-0137.

General Notice of COBRA Continuation Coverage Rights

This notice describes how you and/or your dependents may have the right to continue coverage after you lose eligibility under the terms of Helena Public Schools's health plan.

Introduction

You're getting this notice because you recently gained coverage under a group health plan (the Plan). This notice has important information about your right to COBRA continuation coverage, which is a temporary extension of coverage under the Plan. **This notice explains COBRA continuation coverage, when it may become available to you and your family, and what you need to do to protect your right to get it.** When you become eligible for COBRA, you may also become eligible for other coverage options that may cost less than COBRA continuation coverage.

The right to COBRA continuation coverage was created by a federal law, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA). COBRA continuation coverage can become available to you and other members of your family when group health coverage would otherwise end. For more information about your rights and obligations under the Plan and under federal law, you should review the Plan's Summary Plan Description or contact the Plan Administrator.

You may have other options available to you when you lose group health coverage. For example, you may be eligible to buy an individual plan through the Health Insurance Marketplace. By enrolling in coverage through the Marketplace, you may qualify for lower costs on your monthly premiums and lower out-of-pocket costs. Additionally, you may qualify for a 30-day special enrollment period for another group health plan for which you are eligible (such as a spouse's plan), even if that plan generally doesn't accept late enrollees.

What is COBRA continuation coverage?

COBRA continuation coverage is a continuation of Plan coverage when it would otherwise end because of a life event. This is also called a "qualifying event." Specific qualifying events are listed later in this notice. After a qualifying event, COBRA continuation coverage must be offered to each person who is a "qualified beneficiary." You, your spouse, and your dependent children could become qualified beneficiaries if coverage under the Plan is lost because of the qualifying event. Under the Plan, qualified beneficiaries who elect COBRA continuation coverage must pay for COBRA continuation coverage.

If you're an employee, you'll become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the Plan because of the following qualifying events:

- Your hours of employment are reduced, or
- Your employment ends for any reason other than your gross misconduct.

If you're the spouse of an employee, you'll become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the Plan because of the following qualifying events:

- Your spouse dies;
- Your spouse's hours of employment are reduced;
- Your spouse's employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct;
- Your spouse becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both); or
- You become divorced or legally separated from your spouse.

Your dependent children will become qualified beneficiaries if they lose coverage under the Plan because of the following qualifying events:

- The parent-employee dies;
- The parent-employee's hours of employment are reduced;
- The parent-employee's employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct;
- The parent-employee becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (Part A, Part B, or both);
- The parents become divorced or legally separated; or
- The child stops being eligible for coverage under the Plan as a "dependent child."

When is COBRA continuation coverage available?

The Plan will offer COBRA continuation coverage to qualified beneficiaries only after the Plan Administrator has been notified that a qualifying event has occurred. The employer must notify the Plan Administrator of the following qualifying events:

- The end of employment or reduction of hours of employment;
- Death of the employee; or
- The employee's becoming entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both).

For all other qualifying events (divorce or legal separation of the employee and spouse or a dependent child's losing eligibility for coverage as a dependent child), you must notify the Plan Administrator within 60 days after the qualifying event occurs. You must provide this notice to Human Resources.

How is COBRA continuation coverage provided?

Once the Plan Administrator receives notice that a qualifying event has occurred, COBRA continuation coverage will be offered to each of the qualified beneficiaries. Each qualified beneficiary will have an independent right to elect COBRA continuation coverage. Covered employees may elect COBRA continuation coverage on behalf of their spouses, and parents may elect COBRA continuation coverage on behalf of their children.

COBRA continuation coverage is a temporary continuation of coverage that generally lasts for 18 months due to employment termination or reduction of hours of work. Certain qualifying events, or a second qualifying event during the initial period of coverage, may permit a beneficiary to receive a maximum of 36 months of coverage.

There are also ways in which this 18-month period of COBRA continuation coverage can be extended:

Disability extension of 18-month period of COBRA continuation coverage

If you or anyone in your family covered under the Plan is determined by Social Security to be disabled and you notify the Plan Administrator in a timely fashion, you and your entire family may be entitled to get up to an additional 11 months of COBRA continuation coverage, for a maximum of 29 months. The disability would have to have started at some time before the 60th day of COBRA continuation coverage and must last at least until the end of the 18-month period of COBRA continuation coverage.

Second qualifying event extension of 18-month period of continuation coverage

If your family experiences another qualifying event during the 18 months of COBRA continuation coverage, the spouse and dependent children in your family can get up to 18 additional months of COBRA continuation coverage, for a maximum of 36 months, if the Plan is properly notified about the second qualifying event. This extension may be available to the spouse and any dependent children getting COBRA continuation coverage if the employee or former employee dies; becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both); gets divorced or legally separated; or if the dependent child stops being eligible under the Plan as a dependent child. This extension is only available if the second qualifying event would have caused the spouse or dependent child to lose coverage under the Plan had the first qualifying event not occurred.

Are there other coverage options besides COBRA Continuation Coverage?

Yes. Instead of enrolling in COBRA continuation coverage, there may be other coverage options for you and your family through the Health Insurance Marketplace, Medicare, Medicaid, [Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\)](#), or other group health plan coverage options (such as a spouse's plan) through what is called a "special enrollment period." Some of these options may cost less than COBRA continuation coverage. You can learn more about many of these options at www.healthcare.gov.

Can I enroll in Medicare instead of COBRA continuation coverage after my group health plan coverage ends?

In general, if you don't enroll in Medicare Part A or B when you are first eligible because you are still employed, after the Medicare initial enrollment period, you have an 8-month special enrollment period to sign up for Medicare part A or B, beginning on the earlier of:

- The month after your employment ends; or
- The month after group health plan coverage based on current employment ends

If you don't enroll in Medicare and elect COBRA continuation coverage instead, you may have to pay a Part B late enrollment penalty and you may have a gap in coverage if you decide you want Part B later. If you elect COBRA continuation coverage and later enroll in Medicare Part A or B before the COBRA continuation coverage ends, the Plan may terminate your continuation coverage. However, if Medicare Part A or B is effective on or before the date of the COBRA election, COBRA coverage may not be discontinued on account of Medicare entitlement, even if you enroll in the other part of Medicare after the date of the election of COBRA coverage.

If you are enrolled in both COBRA continuation coverage and Medicare, Medicare will generally pay first (primary payer) and COBRA continuation coverage will pay second. Certain plans may pay as if secondary to Medicare, even if you are not enrolled in Medicare.

For more information visit <https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-and-you>.

If you have questions

Questions concerning your Plan or your COBRA continuation coverage rights should be addressed to the contact or contacts identified below. For more information about your rights under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), including COBRA, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and other laws affecting group health plans, contact the nearest Regional or District Office of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) in your area or visit www.dol.gov/ebsa. (Addresses and phone numbers of Regional and District EBSA Offices are available through EBSA's website.) For more information about the Marketplace, visit www.HealthCare.gov.

Keep your Plan informed of address changes

To protect your family's rights, let the Plan Administrator know about any changes in the addresses of family members. You should also keep a copy, for your records, of any notices you send to the Plan Administrator.

Plan contact information

Name of Entity/Sender:	Helena Public Schools
Contact-Position/Office:	Human Resources Director
Address:	1325 Poplar Street, Helena, Montana 59601
Phone Number:	(406) 324-2014

