

Continuation of Benefits during Leave of Absence Notice

This notice has been sent to you by your Agency.

Please contact your Agency Health Benefits Representative (HBR) with any questions.

Name:	Personnel No:	Date:
Address:	Personnel Area:	
	Payroll Area:	

You have the option to continue your State Health Plan and your NCFlex Insurance Plans during your Leave of Absence (LOA). This notice provides continuation instructions.

If, during your LOA, you are **using approved leave and your pay continues in full**, your benefits will continue without interruption and you do not need to do anything. **IMPORTANT:** Employees on LOA receiving **Short Term Disability** benefits or **Workers Compensation** benefits are not considered to be in pay status for benefits continuation, they are considered to be on LOA without pay (see *below for continuation options*).

If, during your LOA, you are **not using approved leave and are without pay**, see *below*. This includes, but is not limited to, LOAs for **Family Medical Leave (FMLA)**, **Family Illness Leave**, **Extended Illness**, and **Military**. Employees on LOA receiving **Short Term Disability** benefits or **Workers Compensation** benefits are considered to be on LOA without pay for benefits continuation.

CONTINUATION OF BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES ON LOA WITHOUT PAY

1. AGENCY AFTER-TAX SPECIFIC BENEFITS - These insurance plans are contracted through the Agency Insurance Committee and are administered by private insurance agencies/brokers, and are not part of NC State Government benefits (State Health Plan and NCFlex plans). You must contact your local agency benefits or payroll representative to receive information on maintaining or cancelling these benefit plans while on LOA without pay.

2. RETIREMENT PLANS - 401K, 457/Deferred Comp, State Retirement System (TSERS, LEORS, CJRS) Your contributions to the supplemental retirement savings plans (401k and 457/Deferred Comp) and to the State Retirement System will cease during your unpaid leave. Contributions to your supplemental retirement savings plans will resume upon your return, unless you contact the vendor to stop participation. If you contribute to the State Retirement System, contributions will resume automatically upon your return to work in an applicable position.

3. NCFLEX PLANS

While on LOA without pay, **your NCFlex benefit plans will terminate**. *Please be sure to note the specific exception regarding **Short Term Disability benefits** below. You may continue your NCFlex plans by sending your premium payments directly to the vendors. NCFlex vendors must receive your payments no later than the 10th of each month or your coverage will end. Vendor contact information can be found at the end of this notice.

***Exception for Short Term Disability:** If you are on LOA and in pay status, and you then begin to receive short term benefits, your NCFlex premiums will continue to be deducted from your short term benefits so long as there is enough short term pay generated to deduct the NCFlex premiums. If your NCFlex premiums were previously terminated due to LOA without pay status, they will not be reinstated if you begin to receive Short Term Disability benefits.

If your NCFlex premium deductions are being deducted from your Short Term Disability benefits but you would like to have those plans term, you must submit a ticket to BEST Shared Services (email: best@osc.nc.gov or phone # 1-866-622-3784) requesting that the benefits be termed. The benefits will be termed on a current basis effective the last day of the prior month.

4. STATE HEALTH PLAN (SHP) - BCBS medical insurance

While on LOA without pay, your State Health Plan will terminate if you do not make your premium payments. If you wish to continue your State Health Plan, you must send your monthly premium payments to BEST Shared Services.

When you are an active employee in pay status, your Agency pays an employer portion towards your State Health Plan premium. You pay the employee and/or dependent portion of the premium, which varies depending on the plan you are enrolled in, the wellness credits you have and/or the dependents you have enrolled. Depending on your type of LOA, the State Health Plan premium you owe may include the employer portion in addition to your usual dependent and/or employee premium contributions. Please consult with your Agency Health Benefits Representative (HBR) if you have questions regarding the premium you owe.

You can choose to drop your dependent coverage during your LOA without pay status and retain employee only coverage by submitting a ticket to BEST Shared Services (email: best@osc.nc.gov or phone # 1-866-622-3784).

HOW TO PAY YOUR SHP PREMIUM

To prevent termination of your State Health Plan while on LOA without pay, BEST Shared Services must receive your first State Health Plan premium payment **by the 10th of the month in which you reach leave without pay status**. If your premium is not received, your State Health Plan will be terminated.

Send Premiums to: BEST Shared Services
 1425 Mail Service Center
 Raleigh, NC 27699-1425

Make checks payable to: **Office of the State Controller** (*please note on your check that you are paying your SHP premium while on LOA*)

Thereafter, BEST Shared Services must continue to receive your State Health Plan premium no later than the 10th of each month or your State Health Plan will be terminated.

If you fail to make the first premium payment, the coverage will be terminated due to LOA without pay status. You will be able to re-enroll in the State Health Plan upon return to work. If, however, you timely mail in premiums to BEST for a period of time, but then stop mailing in premiums and/or fall into an arrears status, the State Health Plan will be termed due to non-payment and you **will not be able to re-enroll upon return to work, and will have to wait until the next open enrollment period**.

Example: If you reach leave without pay status in January, the first State Health Plan premium is due to BEST by January 10th, with the next payment due by February 10th, and so forth. If you continue to mail in premiums for January and February, but then fail to mail in a premium in March, the coverage will be terminated due to non payment and you will not be able to re-enroll upon return to work, and will have to wait until the next open enrollment period.

It is your responsibility to make timely monthly SHP premium payments. No monthly reminders, invoices or payment coupons will be sent to you by BEST or the State Health Plan.

5. STATE HEALTH PLAN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SHP & SHORT TERM DISABILITY

If you are receiving Short Term Disability Benefits, your State Health Plan premiums will be deducted from your benefit payments as long as the funds are sufficient to pay the premiums and as long as your plan is active and has not already been termed. If your Short Term benefits are not sufficient to pay your entire premium, you must submit your payment for the remaining portion as directed above, or your coverage will be terminated.

Please be reminded that, if you are approved for Short Term Disability, and:

- **You have less than five (5) years of retirement service credit**, you are responsible for the employer, employee and dependent portions of the premiums for your State Health Plan.
- **You have five (5) or more years of retirement service credit**, you are eligible to have the employer portion of your premium paid by your Agency during your approved short term disability period. You are still responsible for the employee and dependent portions.

NOTE: If you are waiting for approval of your application for short term disability benefits, or, if you have been approved, but your benefits have not yet started and you are in non pay status, you must submit payment for your health plan premiums as directed above or your health plan will be terminated. Once approval is obtained and benefits are paid, you will be refunded the employer portion of the health plan premiums previously paid by you, if applicable.

SHP & FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)

If you are on approved FML, you are eligible to have the employer portion of your State Health Plan premium paid by your Agency until your twelve (12) week FML benefit ends. You are still responsible for your employee and dependent premiums. If you reach leave without pay status and/or have insufficient pay to cover your share of your State Health Plan premium, you must pay the employee and dependent portions of your premiums as directed above. If your portion of your State Health Plan premium is not paid, your coverage will be terminated. If, however, you make timely payments of your share of your State Health Plan premium until your FML ends, and then you continue to remain out on an approved leave of absence without pay, you will be responsible for paying the full cost (employer, employee and dependent premiums) to continue coverage. If you do not pay the full cost, your coverage will be terminated due to LOA without pay status.

SHP & WORKERS COMPENSATION LEAVE SHP & MILITARY RESERVE ACTIVE DUTY (RAD)-STATE SERVICE

If you are on Workers Compensation Leave or Military RAD-State Service, you are eligible to have the employer portion of your State Health Plan premium paid by your Agency until your benefit period ends. You are still responsible for your employee and dependent premiums and must pay them as directed above. If your share of your State Health Plan premium is not received, your coverage will be terminated due to LOA without pay status.

SHP & OTHER UNPAID LEAVE

If you are on any other type of unpaid leave, you can continue your State Health Plan by paying the full cost (employer, employee and dependent portions of your premium) as directed above. If your premium is not received as directed, your coverage will be terminated due to LOA without pay status.

NOTE: *If your State Health Plan was termed prior to you being approved for LOA- **Short Term Disability, FMLA, Workers Comp, or Military RAD - State Service**, you must contact your Agency HBR to determine whether you have any options for re-enrollment.*

REINSTATEMENT OF ACTIVE BENEFITS UPON RETURN TO WORK

Within 30 days of your return to work, it is your responsibility to re-enroll in any NCFlex Plans and/or the State Health Plan – even if you have been making payments directly to the vendors. You may only re-enroll in the same benefits you had prior to your LOA. You are not permitted to change your benefits or add to your benefits. You may, however, choose not to re-enroll in your benefits, with the exception of the NCFlex Health Care Flexible Spending Account (HCFSA). If you had an NCFlex HCSA prior to your LOA, you are required to re-enroll upon return to work. You may re-enroll with either the same annual contribution with an adjusted monthly amount, or the same monthly contribution as prior to your LOA. You will need to contact BEST Shared Services to set up the appropriate HCSA deduction of your choice, or BEST will default the re-enrollment to the same annual contribution option with an adjusted monthly amount.

If you did not pay premiums during your unpaid LOA, you may have waiting periods or be required to meet evidence of insurability (EOI) upon re-enrollment in certain benefits. You must complete your re-enrollment through the eEnroll system or by calling the enrollment vendor at 855-859-0966 within 30 days of your reinstatement date.

INFORMATION RE: OPEN ENROLLMENT WHILE ON LOA

If you are on LOA during open enrollment, you must complete your open enrollment for any benefits that are active for you at that time. This includes:

- SHP if you are being payroll deducted or if you are mailing your premiums directly to BEST Shared Services; and
- NCFlex plans for which you are being payroll deducted.

NOTE: This does not include any NC Flex plans in which you are paying directly to the NCFlex vendors.

You will have to wait until you return to work to re-enroll in any benefits that have termed during your LOA. If you return to work from your LOA after open enrollment, you will have the option of enrolling in new benefits for the applicable plan year.

If you have any questions about the information provided in this notice, please contact BEST Shared Services at 1-866-622-3784 or your Agency Health Benefits Representative (HBR).

NCFLEX VENDOR CONTACT INFORMATION

It is your responsibility to make timely monthly payments. No monthly reminders, invoices or payment coupons will be sent to you by the NCFlex vendors. Premiums should be mailed to:

NCFlex Accident Plan

LifeHelp
NCFlex Enrollment
PO Box 492517
Redding, CA 96049
Make checks payable to: Voya

NCFlex Dental Plan

Interactive Medical Systems (IMS)
Attention: LOA NC Flex Dental
PO Box 1349
Wake Forest, NC 27588
Make check payable to: Interactive Medical Systems
Participants can continue the plan for up to 24 months.

NCFlex Vision Plan

EyeMed Vision Care
www.eyemedvisioncare.com/NCFlexoe
1-866-248-1939
Note: You are covered by this plan while on Leave of Absence.

NCFlex Cancer Plan

American Heritage Life Insurance Company
PO Box 4331
Carol Stream, IL 60197-4331
Make check payable to: Allstate Workplace Division (please indicate certificate/policy number on the check)

Participants can continue the coverage for up to 60 days (12 weeks if FML) provided premiums are paid timely. If your leave is expected to last longer than 60 days, and your leave is due to a diagnosis of cancer for you, please apply for the **Cancer Disability Premium Waiver**. To apply for the waiver, complete the Cancer Claim form available via the NCFlex website at www.ncflex.org. If you are not eligible for the waiver, the coverage automatically terminates and you will need to satisfy evidence of insurability (EOI) to restart the coverage upon your return to employment. However, you will be eligible to continue the plan by applying for COBRA continuation coverage through the vendor directly. If you pay the vendor directly while on LOA, you will not be subject to EOI upon return to employment/reinstatement of the benefit.

If you decide not to continue premiums during your leave or you fail to pay the premiums, claims incurred during this gap will not be covered. You may restart your coverage without EOI if you return to work within 60 days. If you return to work after 60 days (12 weeks if FML), EOI is required.

NCFlex Critical Illness Plan

American Heritage Life Insurance Company
PO Box 4331
Carol Stream, IL 60197-4331
Make check payable to: Allstate Workplace Division (please indicate certificate/policy number on the check)
Participants can continue the plan.

NCFlex TRICARE Supplemental Health Plan

Selman & Company
Attn: Billing Department
6110 Parkland Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44124
Make check payable to: Selman & Company
Participants can continue the plan.

NCFlex Life Insurance

LifeHelp
NCFlex Enrollment
PO Box 492517
Redding, CA 96049
Make checks payable to: Voya
Employees who are going to be on an LOA longer than 3 months can continue their coverage by filling out the **Term Life Continuation Request** form. Otherwise payment should go to the PO Box listed above.
If you are under age 70, and are on any other type of unpaid leave, you may continue your coverage by completing the Term Life Coverage Continuation Request form available via the NCFlex website at www.ncflex.org or by contacting the life insurance vendor at 1-877-464-5111.

NCFlex AD&D Insurance

LifeHelp
NCFlex Enrollment
PO Box 492517
Redding, CA 96049
Make checks payable to: Voya

NCFlex Core AD&D

Coverage Amount 10,000.00 USD
You are not covered by this plan while on an unpaid leave of Absence, unless it is approved Family Medical Leave (FML). You must re-enroll into this plan once you return from your Leave of Absence.

NCFlex Health Care Flexible Spending Account (HCFSA)

During your unpaid leave, if you are expecting to incur health claims and have a remaining account balance, you may want to continue making contributions. If you do not continue contributions while on unpaid leave, any claims incurred during the leave period cannot be reimbursed under this plan. To continue contributions, please send your contributions to:

NCFLEX FSA Account Administrator-OSC Central Compliance
Office of State Controller
1410 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1410

Make check payable to: State of North Carolina

Checks are due by the 10th of each month. No reminders will be sent.

NOTE: Please be reminded that the convenience card will be deactivated during an unpaid leave. However, manual claims for reimbursement can still be submitted if you continue to submit your contributions while on LOA.

NCFlex Dependent Care FSA

This plan cannot be continued while on leave. You may re-enroll when you return to work on a full-time basis.