

**RCW 48.21.250 Continuation option to be offered.** Every insurer that issues policies providing group coverage for hospital or medical expense shall offer the policyholder an option to include a policy provision granting a person who becomes ineligible for coverage under the group policy, the right to continue the group benefits for a period of time and at a rate agreed upon. The policy provision shall provide that when such coverage terminates, the covered person may convert to a policy as provided in RCW 48.21.260. [1984 c 190 s 2.]

**Legislative intent—1984 c 190:** "The legislature recognizes that when people covered by a group health insurance policy lose their group insurance benefits because they are no longer eligible, they need time to obtain a suitable form of replacement coverage or time to complete a reasonable course of medical treatment for a health condition that existed when the group benefits ended.

Spouses and dependents can lose their group insurance and may not have any other health insurance when one spouse covered under a group policy dies, obtains a divorce, or becomes unemployed. Often the cost of an individual policy prevents these persons from obtaining any other health insurance.

The intent of this act is to require insurers, health care service contractors, and health maintenance organizations to:

(1) Offer to the contract holder the option to continue health and medical benefits for employees, members, spouses, or dependents whose eligibility for coverage under a group policy, contract, or agreement is terminated; and

(2) Provide a conversion policy, contract, or agreement to employees, members, spouses, or dependents whose eligibility for coverage under a group policy, contract, or agreement is terminated." [1984 c 190 s 1.]

**Application—1984 c 190 ss 2, 5, and 8:** "Sections 2, 5, and 8 of this act shall apply to any policy, contract, or agreement issued, renewed, or amended on or after January 1, 1985." [1984 c 190 s 12.]

**Severability—1984 c 190:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1984 c 190 s 13.]