

WAC 182-08-198 When may a subscriber change health plans? A subscriber may change health plans at the following times:

(1) **During the annual open enrollment:** A subscriber may change health plans during the public employees benefits board (PEBB) annual open enrollment period. A subscriber must submit the required enrollment forms to change their health plan. An employee submits the enrollment forms to their employing agency. Any other subscriber submits the enrollment forms to the PEBB program. The required enrollment forms must be received no later than the last day of the annual open enrollment. Enrollment in the new health plan will begin January 1st of the following year.

(2) **During a special open enrollment:** A subscriber may revoke their health plan election and make a new election outside of the annual open enrollment if a special open enrollment event occurs. A special open enrollment event must be an event other than an employee gaining initial eligibility for PEBB benefits. The change in enrollment must be allowable under Internal Revenue Code and Treasury regulations, and correspond to and be consistent with the event that creates the special open enrollment for the subscriber, the subscriber's dependent, or both. To make a health plan change, a subscriber must submit the required enrollment forms (and a completed disenrollment form, if required). The forms must be received no later than sixty days after the event occurs, except as described in (i) of this subsection. An employee submits the enrollment forms to their employing agency. Any other subscriber submits the enrollment forms to the PEBB program. In addition to the required forms, a subscriber must provide evidence of the event that created the special open enrollment. New health plan coverage will begin the first day of the month following the later of the event date or the date the form is received. If that day is the first of the month, the change in enrollment begins on that day.

Exception: When a subscriber or their dependent is enrolled in a medicare advantage plan, the new health plan coverage will begin the first day of the month following the date the medicare advantage plan disenrollment form is received.

If the special open enrollment is due to the birth, adoption, or assumption of legal obligation for total or partial support in anticipation of adoption of a child, health plan coverage will begin the month in which the birth, adoption, or assumption of legal obligation for total or partial support in anticipation of adoption occurs. Any one of the following events may create a special open enrollment:

- (a) Subscriber acquires a new dependent due to:
 - (i) Marriage or registering a state registered domestic partnership;
 - (ii) Birth, adoption, or when the subscriber has assumed a legal obligation for total or partial support in anticipation of adoption; or
 - (iii) A child becoming eligible as an extended dependent through legal custody or legal guardianship.
- (b) Subscriber or a subscriber's dependent loses other coverage under a group health plan or through health insurance coverage, as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA);
- (c) Subscriber has a change in employment status that affects the subscriber's eligibility for their employer contribution toward their employer-based group health plan;
- (d) The subscriber's dependent has a change in their own employment status that affects their eligibility for the employer contribution under their employer-based group health plan;

Note: As used in (d) of this subsection, "employer contribution" means contributions made by the dependent's current or former employer toward health coverage as described in Treasury Regulation 26 C.F.R. 54.9801-6.

(e) Subscriber or a subscriber's dependent has a change in residence that affects health plan availability. If the subscriber moves and the subscriber's current health plan is not available in the new location the subscriber must select a new health plan, otherwise there will be limited accessibility to network providers and covered services;

Exception: A dental plan is considered available if a provider is located within fifty miles of the subscriber's new residence.

(f) A court order requires the subscriber or any other individual to provide insurance coverage for an eligible dependent of the subscriber (a former spouse or former state registered domestic partner is not an eligible dependent);

(g) Subscriber or a subscriber's dependent becomes entitled to coverage under medicaid or a state children's health insurance program (CHIP), or the subscriber or a subscriber's dependent loses eligibility for coverage under medicaid or CHIP;

(h) Subscriber or a subscriber's dependent becomes eligible for state premium assistance subsidy for PEBB health plan coverage from medicaid or CHIP;

(i) Subscriber or a subscriber's dependent becomes entitled to coverage under medicare, or the subscriber or a subscriber's dependent loses eligibility for coverage under medicare, or enrolls in or terminates enrollment in a medicare Part D plan. If the subscriber's current health plan becomes unavailable due to the subscriber's or a subscriber's dependent's entitlement to medicare, the subscriber must select a new health plan as described in WAC 182-08-196 (2). A subscriber has six months from the date of their or their dependent's enrollment in medicare Part B to enroll in a PEBB medicare supplement plan for which they or their dependent is eligible. The forms must be received by the PEBB program no later than six months after the enrollment in medicare Part B for either the subscriber or the subscriber's dependent;

(j) Subscriber or a subscriber's dependent's current health plan becomes unavailable because the subscriber or enrolled dependent is no longer eligible for a health savings account (HSA). The authority may require evidence that the subscriber or subscriber's dependent is no longer eligible for an HSA;

(k) Subscriber or a subscriber's dependent experiences a disruption of care for active and ongoing treatment, that could function as a reduction in benefits for the subscriber or the subscriber's dependent. A subscriber may not change their health plan election if the subscriber's or dependent's physician stops participation with the subscriber's health plan unless the PEBB program determines that a continuity of care issue exists. The PEBB program will consider but not limit its consideration to the following:

(i) Active cancer treatment such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy;

(ii) Treatment following a recent organ transplant;

(iii) A scheduled surgery;

(iv) Recent major surgery still within the postoperative period;

or

(v) Treatment for a high-risk pregnancy.

(3) If the employee is having premiums taken from payroll on a pretax basis, a health plan change will not be approved if it would conflict with provisions of the salary reduction plan authorized under RCW 41.05.300.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.021, 41.05.160, and PEBB policy resolutions. WSR 19-17-073 (Admin #2019-01), § 182-08-198, filed 8/20/19, effective 1/1/20; WSR 18-20-117 (Admin #2018-02), § 182-08-198, filed 10/3/18, effective 1/1/19; WSR 17-19-077 (Order 2017-01), § 182-08-198, filed 9/15/17, effective 1/1/18. Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.021, 41.05.160, 2016 c 67, and PEBB policy resolutions. WSR 16-20-080, § 182-08-198, filed 10/4/16, effective 1/1/17. Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.160 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 4. WSR 14-20-058 (PEBB Admin 2014-02), § 182-08-198, filed 9/25/14, effective 1/1/15. Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.160, 2013 2nd sp.s. c 4 and PEBB policy resolutions. WSR 14-08-040, § 182-08-198, filed 3/26/14, effective 4/26/14. Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.160 and 2012 2nd sp.s. c 3. WSR 13-22-019 (Admin. 2013-01), § 182-08-198, filed 10/28/13, effective 1/1/14. Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.160. WSR 12-20-022 (Order 2012-01), § 182-08-198, filed 9/25/12, effective 11/1/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.160 and 2011 c 8. WSR 11-22-036 (Order 11-02), § 182-08-198, filed 10/26/11, effective 1/1/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.160. WSR 10-20-147 (Order 10-02), § 182-08-198, filed 10/6/10, effective 1/1/11; WSR 09-23-102 (Order 09-02), § 182-08-198, filed 11/17/09, effective 1/1/10; WSR 08-20-128 (Order 08-03), § 182-08-198, filed 10/1/08, effective 1/1/09; WSR 08-09-027 (Order 08-01), § 182-08-198, filed 4/8/08, effective 4/9/08; WSR 07-20-129 (Order 07-01), § 182-08-198, filed 10/3/07, effective 11/3/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.160 and 41.05.068. WSR 06-23-165 (Order 06-09), § 182-08-198, filed 11/22/06, effective 12/23/06. Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.160, 41.05.350, and 41.05.165. WSR 05-16-046 (Order 05-01), § 182-08-198, filed 7/27/05, effective 8/27/05.]