

**CONTINUING INSURANCE COVERAGE DURING LEAVE WITHOUT PAY
GROUP INSURANCE LEAVE OF ABSENCE STATUS NOTIFICATION**

You may continue all your insurance coverage while you are on leave by paying your monthly premium directly to the Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS). You are eligible to continue insurance coverage while on leave for a maximum period of 12 continuous months. At the end of the maximum period, you will have the option to continue coverage under the provisions of COBRA provided you meet certain eligibility criteria. ERS will send you more information about COBRA coverage when you reach the end of the 12-month period of eligibility.

IF YOUR LEAVE STATUS IS FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (FML) & LEAVE WITHOUT PAY (LWOP)

The state will continue to contribute to the cost of your insurance as it does when you are working. You must continue to pay insurance premiums normally deducted from your pay. Your SKIP supplement will continue as long as you continue health coverage for at least one of your SKIP-approved children. Your premium is based on the amount you owe after the state contributes its share of the cost and any SKIP supplement you may be receiving. If you do not pay the total premiums when due, all coverage will be cancelled except employee only health. When your child(ren)'s coverage is cancelled, your SKIP supplement is suspended. If, at a later date, you change from FML to LWOP leave, you will no longer receive the state contribution and your SKIP supplement will be suspended.

IF YOUR LEAVE STATUS IS LEAVE WITHOUT PAY (LWOP)

The state will not contribute to the cost of your insurance as it does when you are working and your SKIP supplement will be suspended. The premium you owe will include the state contribution amount and the amount normally deducted from your pay. If you do not pay the total premiums when due, all coverage will be cancelled.

CHANGING COVERAGE WHILE IN A LEAVE WITHOUT PAY STATUS

While you are on leave, you may drop coverage at any time. You can add coverage if you have a Qualifying Life Event (QLE) and you can make a request to change your coverage within 30 days of the QLE. The Benefits Office or ERS can assist you.

REINSTATING COVERAGE WHEN YOU RETURN TO WORK

It is important that you contact the Benefits Office as soon as you return to work. If your coverage is reduced or cancelled for non-payment of premiums while you are on LWOP, you can reinstate that coverage when you return to work. If your SKIP supplement was suspended, it will be reinstated if you return in the same plan year and you elect to reinstate at least one of your SKIP-approved child(ren)'s health coverage.

DISABILITY INCOME BENEFITS

If you are on LWOP due to a disabling condition and you have short or long term disability coverage, you may wish to apply for disability income benefits by completing the form entitled A Preliminary Statement of Disability. If you are on LWOP for medical reasons and carrying disability coverage, a form is available at www.ers.state.tx.us and should be returned to the Benefits Office for processing.

EXTENDED LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS

If you are totally disabled for at least six months prior to reaching age 60, you may be eligible to continue life insurance coverage without paying a monthly premium. To apply for this benefit, you must complete the form entitled A Claim for Extended Life Insurance Benefits. If you are on LWOP for medical reasons and under age 60, a form is available at www.ers.state.tx.us and should be returned to the Benefits Office for processing.

HEALTH INSURANCE OPT-OUT CREDIT

If you elected to receive the health insurance opt-out credit because you have other creditable health coverage, you will not be eligible to receive the opt-out credit towards your dental and/or AD&D premiums while on LWOP. You will be responsible for the full premium. If you are on FMLA, the opt-out credit continues. When you return to work, you will again be eligible to receive the opt-out credit. If you wish to enroll in health coverage when you return to work, you may apply for HealthSelect through Evidence of Insurability (EOI).