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HBP #S:100

HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

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SPECIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE COVERAGE (SLOAC) - PROCEDURES

Special Leave of Absence Coverage (SLOAC) Procedures Update

SLOAC will provide up to four months of additional health coverage for each of the following categories of leave without pay:

- Temporary Disability/Illness
- Worker's Compensation
- Military Leave (may be offered in time of military conflict)

I. Eligibility- To be eligible for SLOAC:

1. Employees must have exhausted all accumulated leave balances including sick leave, annual leave and compensatory time (this does not apply for employees on Worker's Compensation), and,
2. Employees must be enrolled in the City Health Benefits Program, on pay status and receiving a paycheck immediately preceding the SLOAC event, and,
3. Employees must be on an agency approved leave of absence, and,
4. Employees who receive a partial paycheck for the payroll period immediately prior to being placed on SLOAC must have received a full paycheck for the preceding payroll period.
5. Employees returning to pay status after a leave period, or new employees, are not eligible for SLOAC until they have worked one full pay period.

II. Duration of Coverage

SLOAC will be provided for up to four months in any one-year period for each category of leave. Employees who have had their full entitlement of SLOAC in a 12 month period for temporary disability/illness and remain on authorized disability /illness leave without pay beyond that one year will not be entitled to another SLOAC period unless the employee returns to work for at least **one full** payroll period.

For administrative purposes, the maximum period of four months for SLOAC is defined as 9 bi-weekly, 18 weekly, 8 semi-monthly or 4 monthly pay periods .

III. Effective Dates

The effective dates for placement on and removal from SLOAC will be determined according to payroll periods. For example, if an employee is eligible for SLOAC after the first day of a payroll period, the employee will be placed on SLOAC on the first day of the following payroll period. Termination from SLOAC will result at the return to pay status or the expiration of the SLOAC entitlement.

The date on which the employee will no longer be on payroll must be indicated on the Health Benefits Report/Inquiry Form (EB1054). Incorrect dates will delay coverage and thereby prevent payment for hospital and medical claims or in the case of an HMO enrollee, access to medical care.

Non-PACES AGENCIES

The Health Benefits Report/Inquiry Form (EB1054) is to be used for all SLOAC notifications and must be submitted to the health plan with the appropriate category of leave clearly indicated.

PACES AGENCIES

The EB1054 must be submitted to the Health Benefits Program, Agency Liaison Unit, unless your agency has been trained and authorized to process enrollments directly into the PACES database.

IV. Enrollment- Deadlines

1. The EB1054 form or PACES data placing employees on SLOAC, must be received by the health plan within 31 days of the date on which the employee left pay status.

2. To reinstate an employee on pay status and remove from SLOAC, the health plan must be notified within 31 days of the effective date of the employee's return to pay status. Failure to meet the above deadlines may result in the termination of the employee's health plan coverage.

VI. Procedures for Each Category of Leave

Temporary Disability/Illness

An employee must exhaust all leave balances and be eligible for an agency approved illness/disability leave before being placed on SLOAC for Temporary Disability/Illness. A physician must determine that an employee is unable to work and documentation from that physician must be received and placed in the employee's file.

The following format should be used to complete an EB1054 when placing an employee on Temporary Disability/Illness SLOAC.

1. The agency benefits/payroll officer will verify on the EB1054 that a doctor's note has been received and that it is on file.
2. Write in "Temporary Disability/Illness" under SLOAC in the **REASON FOR SUBMISSION SECTION**.
3. Under **COVERAGE DATES**, indicate the exact date the employee will be placed on SLOAC. This will be the first day of the subsequent payroll period, unless the employee goes off pay status on the first day of a payroll period which, in that case, will be the effective date.

FOR SLOAC DUE TO PREGNANCY- When placing an employee on SLOAC for Temporary Disability/Illness due to pregnancy, the agency benefits/payroll officer will:

a. Indicate on the EB1054 form the employee's expected date of delivery. If delivery is expected within the four-month period, the agency benefits/payroll officer will provide the employee with an Health Benefits Enrollment Form (ERB95) to be used for enrolling the newborn child for the purpose of providing coverage for that child. The employee must submit the completed form to the health benefits representative within 31 days of the birth.

b. Within 31 days of the birth, the enrollment form (ERB95) must be forwarded to the employee's health plan with an EB1054 form explaining that the subscriber is on SLOAC and listing the addition of a dependent and the expected date of the employee's return to work.

c. In EXPLANATION/INQUIRY SECTION of the EB1054 form indicate expected date of delivery if date is within four-month period of coverage.

Worker's Compensation

It is not required that an employee's leave balance be exhausted before the employee can be placed on SLOAC due to Worker's Compensation. The agency benefits/payroll officer should prepare an EB1054 form using the same format as stated for Temporary Disability/Illness.

VII. Return to Pay Status

To reinstate an employee to pay status, a new ERB95 form must be completed by the employee and received by the health plan within 31 days of the return to duty. Health benefits should be reinstated effective the date the employee returns to pay status. Employees returning to pay status may be subject to retroactive payroll deductions for optional benefits or portions of basic plan cost for the period enrolled in SLOAC or may be billed directly by a health plan. If the employee does not return to duty by the end of the SLOAC period, report the end date of SLOAC coverage with a termination transaction to the health plan on an EB1054.

VIII. Additional Regulations

An employee cannot add optional benefits or transfer health plans after being placed on SLOAC.

An Employee who submits an ERB95 form to change health plans or add or drop optional benefits during a transfer period, but is subsequently placed on SLOAC prior to the effective date of those changes, will be required to submit another ERB95 within 31 days of reinstatement to pay status with identical changes to those requested on the original ERB95 submitted during the transfer period. With all resubmissions, the agency benefits/payroll officer must submit along with a new ERB95 form, an EB1054 explaining the reason for the resubmission.

IX. COBRA

The date of the COBRA qualifying event for an employee who does not return to work following a period of SLOAC leave will be the end of the SLOAC period. The period of SLOAC coverage will count towards the 18-month COBRA coverage period. Agencies must follow existing procedures for providing COBRA Notice of Rights and Application Forms.

X. AUDIT

Agency records concerning SLOAC will be subject to audit by the City of New York Health Benefits Program at any time.

Questions about SLOAC procedures should be directed to the respective Agency Liaison representative at the NYC Health Benefits Program.

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