

## **Employee Benefits Division Policy Memorandum**

**Number: Policy Memo 71r1**

**Date Issued: May 11, 2018**

**Subject: Continuing Dental and Vision Coverage in Leave Without Pay Status**

### **PURPOSE:**

Establish the process for continuing dental and vision coverage while in leave without pay status.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In the past, when an employee enrolled in the State's health plan went on leave without pay, the employee could have elected to continue that coverage during the leave period. Coverage in the State dental and vision plans, however, was terminated. Our consultants at Foster Higgins advised us that a leave without pay is considered to be a "reduction in hours" for COBRA purposes and therefore the employee is eligible for continued dental and vision coverage in COBRA status for the leave period.

Permitting the employee to continue dental and vision coverage as a COBRA enrollee during the leave would have required development of new administrative and accounting procedures. Also, using a different enrollment application and payment procedure for dental and vision coverage than that which was used for health coverage would have created confusion for enrollees.

### **POLICY:**

Employees entering leave without pay status may elect to continue dental and vision coverage at full share for the leave period. Employees must submit a written request to continue coverage within 60 days of the start of the leave.