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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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### Benefits Administration

615.741.3590 or 1.800.253.9981  
[www.state.tn.us/finance/ins/](http://www.state.tn.us/finance/ins/)

This document is intended to provide a summary of eligibility requirements for the continuation of insurance coverage at retirement. For detailed information, please consult your agency benefits coordinator.



Department of Finance and Administration,  
Authorization No. 317315, October 2011.

# CONTINUING INSURANCE AT RETIREMENT

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## Local Education Plan

## Non-TCRS Participants

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## CONTINUING INSURANCE AT RETIREMENT — LOCAL EDUCATION NON-TCRS

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### CONTINUING COVERAGE AT RETIREMENT

All covered local education employees who meet the qualifications may continue medical insurance at retirement for themselves and covered eligible dependents (spouse and/or children). Retired employees may continue until they become eligible for Medicare by virtue of age. Covered dependents will also be allowed to continue coverage until they become eligible for Medicare by virtue of age or no longer qualify as eligible dependents. For individuals to continue insurance benefits, the agency from which they retire must continue to participate in the local education plan.

A retiree whose spouse is also an eligible covered employee participating in one of the state sponsored plans may continue coverage as a dependent on the active spouse's contract instead of electing retiree coverage. When the spouse terminates employment, the retiree may resume coverage under their own eligibility if not yet eligible for Medicare due to age.

### INDIVIDUALS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICARE

#### Service Requirements

Eligible retirees must have at least ten years of creditable service to continue insurance coverage. Accumulated unused sick leave may be counted. Military service that did not interrupt employment, educational leave, leave of absence, or service with a local government agency cannot be counted. A local education employee may

include employment with the State of Tennessee or a state higher education institution to calculate total employment. The eligibility guidelines are:

- Ten years of creditable service with the state or a participating local education agency, must be age 55 **and** at least three years of insurance coverage in the plan immediately prior to retirement. The date of retirement must immediately follow the employee's date of final termination from employment.
- At least 20 or more years of creditable service with the state or a participating local education agency, must be age 55 **and** at least one year of insurance coverage in the plan immediately prior to retirement. The period of time between the employee's final termination date and the retirement date may be up to five years.
- Twenty-five years of creditable service with the state or a participating local education agency **and** one continuous year of insurance coverage immediately prior to retirement.

The one-year and three-year participation requirement will be waived if the local education agency has not participated in the plan for that length of time.

Years of service applies to eligibility to continue insurance coverage, not necessarily toward premium reduction. State premium support is provided on teaching service only.

**Application**

Eligible employees who wish to continue insurance coverage at retirement should submit an Application to Continue Insurance at Retirement to Benefits Administration. The application must be submitted within one full calendar month of the expiration of active coverage.

If eligible retirees do not enroll within one full calendar month as outlined above, they may only re-enroll if they were on the medical insurance at the time they retired and were eligible to continue that coverage by their age, length of service, length of participation in the plan and meet a special enrollment provision under the guidelines of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Qualifying events include loss of other group coverage due to death of spouse, divorce, termination of spouse's employment, legal separation, loss of eligibility, loss of TennCare, spouse's employer ceases total contribution toward health insurance, spouse's number of work hours required for insurance eligibility are reduced or they acquire a new dependent through marriage, birth or adoption. Application must be made within 60 days of the loss of coverage or acquisition of the new dependent. Appropriate documentation must also be submitted.

Retiring employees must continue in the same health insurance option they were enrolled in immediately prior to retirement

**Premiums**

Retirees will be billed directly by Benefits Administration each month or they can elect to pay by bank draft.

**Claims**

Retirees who continue health coverage will use the same insurance identification card that was used while they were actively employed. Any questions regarding payment of claims should be directed to the insurance company.

**Dependent Coverage**

Retirees may continue insurance coverage for a spouse and/or dependent child if the individuals were covered at retirement and are not eligible for Medicare Part A. Dependents may continue coverage as long as they meet plan eligibility requirements. Newly acquired dependents must be added within 60 days.

Upon the death of a retiree, a covered spouse or dependent will receive six months of free insurance coverage. Dependents of a deceased retiree may continue coverage only if they were covered by the plan upon the retiree's death **and** are not eligible for Medicare.

**Disability Participants**

Employees who qualify for disability retirement may continue coverage if they participated in the local education plan at the time the injury or illness which resulted in the disability occurred and have five years of service. Upon eligibility for Part A of Medicare, disability participants and

their eligible dependents may continue in the plan to the point at which Medicare eligibility would have been attained had the disability not occurred, provided the retired participant remains eligible for the disability allowance and Part B of Medicare is retained.

Retirees who continue participation in the local education plan and subsequently qualify for Medicare due to a disabling condition continue to be eligible for coverage until such time as they would have been eligible for Medicare by virtue of age. Proof of total disability must be shown by submitting an Award Letter from the Social Security Administration or approval by TCRS based on physician review of medical records documenting the disability. The required proof must show total disability existed at the time of termination of employment. Employees who are eligible for a service retirement cannot retire on disability.

Medicare will be the primary coverage and the local education plan the secondary carrier. Coverage will terminate once the retiree or their dependents reach the normal age for Medicare Part A.

**Dental Insurance**

Employees who wish to continue dental benefits at retirement may continue through COBRA. Information is automatically sent upon cancellation of active coverage.

**INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICARE****Medicare Supplement Coverage**

Retirees and their dependents who are eligible for Medicare Part A cannot continue in standard group health coverage, unless grandfathered by the Local Education Insurance Committee. The state group insurance program's medicare supplement coverage is not an available option to non-TCRS local education participants. Those interested in obtaining a medicare supplement policy should obtain coverage through a private carrier.

**End-Stage Renal Disease**

Retirees eligible for Medicare as a result of end-stage renal disease should contact Benefits Administration immediately.

**RETURNING TO WORK****Group Health Insurance**

Returning to full-time employment with an agency that participates in a state sponsored plan will result in the termination of retiree group insurance coverage. Benefits Administration should be contacted immediately when returning to active service.