

Guidance for employers: Certification and recertification of dependents with disabilities during COVID-19 state of emergency

Extensions and exceptions to obtaining physician certification

The Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) is aware of situations in which employees cannot obtain timely physician certification of their dependents with disabilities during the COVID-19 state of emergency declared by the Governor on February 29, 2020. To ensure that dependents with disabilities age 26 and older can maintain Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) and School Employees Benefits Board (SEBB) Program health plan coverage during the COVID-19 state of emergency, we are allowing the following exceptions and timeline extensions until the state of emergency ends.

Initial certification of a dependent with a disability (Either new to PEBB/SEBB or a dependent turning 26)

If an enrolled or new employee is not able to obtain a physician certification during the COVID-19 state of emergency, HCA will allow a temporary extension of the deadline to submit a physician certification for an initial request for coverage for a child with a disability.

To receive the temporary extension, the employee must provide a written attestation to HCA along with the *Certification of a Child With a Disability* form with all sections completed except Section 3, which is normally filled out by the physician.

Please provide [these instructions](#) to your employees who need to complete the attestation process without the physician certification.

The temporary extension will end 60 days after the date the Governor ends the state of emergency. When the state of emergency ends, HCA will send the employee a letter asking them to complete the initial certification process, including the physician's certification.

Recertification of a dependent with a disability

HCA will mail a letter the week of May 4 to subscribers required to recertify. The letter will inform them that recertification dates that fall between March 1, 2020, and the end of the state of emergency will be extended to the last day of the month of the dependent's birthday the following year. For example, if the dependent's certification is set to expire on May 31, 2020, it will be extended to May 31, 2021. The medical plan or HCA will notify subscribers in 2021 when it is time for them to complete the recertification process.

School employees with an attestation from their employer extending temporary coverage for their dependents with disabilities (SEBB Program only)

During the SEBB Program first annual open enrollment last fall, HCA extended temporary enrollment to dependents with disabilities based on attestations from employers. HCA or their medical plan would normally request initial certification from these subscribers throughout 2020 as their dependents' temporary extension periods approached expiration. However, due to the state of emergency, we are granting a further extension.

HCA or their medical plan will notify the subscribers when it is time for them to go through the initial certification process once the state of emergency ends.