CHAPTER 35
ACCIDENT AND HEALTH INSURANCE
BLANKET ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE
[Prior to 10/22/86, Insurance Department[510]]

191—35.1(509) Purpose. The purpose of this regulation is to establish guidelines for insurers to make special risk coverage available to particular groups that will be exposed to specific hazards for a certain period of time.

191—35.2(509) Scope. These rules shall apply to all insurance companies holding a certificate of authority to transact the business of insurance under the provisions of Iowa Code chapters 508 and 515.

191—35.3(509) Definitions.

35.3(1) Blanket accident and sickness insurance is hereby declared to be that form of accident, sickness or accident and sickness insurance designed to insure against specified hazards incident to or defined by reference to a particular activity or activities and covering groups of persons as enumerated in the following subparagraphs:

a. Under a policy issued to an employer, who shall be deemed the policyholder covering any group of employees defined by reference to specific hazards incident to an activity or activities of the policyholder.

b. Under a policy issued to a college, high school, junior high school, grade school, school district, school jurisdictional unit or other institution of learning; or to the head, principal, governing board of any such educational unit who or which shall be deemed the policyholder covering students, teachers or employees.

c. Under a policy issued to any religious, charitable or educational organization, or branch thereof, which shall be deemed the policyholder covering any group of members or participants defined by reference to specified hazards incident to an activity or activities sponsored or supervised by such policyholder.

d. Under a policy issued to a sports team, youth camp, recreational organization or sponsor thereof, which shall be deemed the policyholder, covering members, campers, participants, employees, officials or supervisors.

e. Under a policy issued to any volunteer fire department, first aid, civil defense or other such volunteer organizations, which shall be deemed the policyholder, covering any group of members or participants defined by reference to specified hazards incident to an activity or activities or operations sponsored or supervised by such policyholder.

f. Under a policy issued to a newspaper or other publisher, which shall be deemed the policyholder, covering its carriers.

g. Under a policy issued to an association, other than a labor union, trade association or industrial association, which shall have a constitution and bylaws and which has been organized and is maintained in good faith for purposes other than that of obtaining insurance, which shall be deemed the policyholder, covering any group of members or participants defined by reference to specified hazards incident to an activity or activities or operations sponsored or supervised by such policyholder.

h. Under a policy issued to cover any other risk or class of risks which, in the discretion of the commissioner, may be properly eligible for blanket accident and sickness insurance. The discretion of the commissioner may be exercised on an individual risk basis or class of risks, or both.

35.3(2) Brochure shall mean an instrument, booklet or pamphlet setting forth a statement as to the insurance protection provided, to whom the insurance benefits are payable, sufficient information on the procedure an insured shall follow in filing a claim and such other provisions as are in the opinion of the commissioner of insurance necessary to inform the holder thereof as to rights under the policy.

191—35.4(509) Required provisions. No blanket policy as herein defined shall be issued or delivered in this state unless a copy of the policy and brochure if required, has been approved by the commissioner of insurance in accordance with the provisions set forth in rule 35.7(509). All policies of blanket accident or sickness insurance or combination thereof issued in this state shall contain in substance the following provisions:

35.4(1) A provision that the policy including endorsements and a copy of the application, if any, of the policyholder and the persons insured shall constitute the entire contract between the parties, and that any statement made by the policyholder or by a person insured shall in the absence of fraud, be deemed a representation and not a warranty. No such statement shall be used in defense of a claim under the policy, unless it is contained in a written application. If a copy of such application is not delivered to the person insured the insurer shall be precluded from introducing such application as evidence in any action involving any statements contained therein.

35.4(2) A provision that written notice of sickness or of injury must be given to the insurer within 20 days of the date when such sickness or injury occurred. Failure to give notice within such time shall not invalidate nor reduce any claim if it shall be shown not to have been reasonably possible to give such notice and that notice was given as soon as was reasonably possible.

35.4(3) A provision that the insurer will furnish either to the claimant or to the policyholder for delivery to the claimant such forms as are usually furnished by it for filing proof of loss. If such forms are not furnished before the expiration of 15 days after giving such notice, the claimant shall be deemed to have complied with the requirements of the policy as to proof of loss upon submitting within the time fixed in the policy for filing proof of loss, written proof covering the occurrence, the character and the extent of the loss for which claim is made.

35.4(4) A provision that in the case of claim for loss of time for disability, written proof of such loss must be furnished to the insurer within 90 days after the commencement of the period for which the insurer is liable, and that subsequent written proofs of the continuance of such disability must be furnished to the insurer at such intervals as the insurer may reasonably require, and that in the case of claim for any other loss, written proof of such loss must be furnished to the insurer within 90 days after the date of such loss. Failure to furnish such proof within such time shall not invalidate nor reduce any claim if it shall be shown not to have been reasonably possible to furnish such proof and that such proof was furnished as soon as was reasonably possible.

35.4(5) A provision that all benefits payable under the policy other than benefits for loss of time will be payable immediately upon receipt of due written proof of such loss, and that, subject to due proof of loss, all accrued benefits payable under the policy for loss of time will be paid not less frequently than monthly during the continuance of the period for which the insurer is liable, and that any balance remaining unpaid at the termination of such period will be paid immediately upon receipt of such proof.

35.4(6) A provision that the insurer at its own expense, shall have the right and opportunity to examine the person of the insured when and so often as it may reasonably require during the pendency of claim under the policy and also the right and opportunity to make an autopsy where it is not prohibited by law.

35.4(7) A provision that no action at law or in equity shall be brought to recover under the policy prior to the expiration of 60 days after written proof of loss has been furnished in accordance with the requirements of the policy and that no such action shall be brought after the expiration of three years after the time written proof of loss is required to be furnished.

191—35.5(509) Application and certificates not required. An individual application need not be required from a person covered under a blanket accident and sickness policy, nor shall it be necessary for the insurer to furnish each person a certificate; however, a brochure as herein defined shall be issued to the policyholder for delivery to each person insured as defined in 35.3(1)*"b"* and *"g."*

191—35.6(509) Facility of payment. All benefits under any blanket accident and sickness policy shall be payable to the person insured, to a designated beneficiary or beneficiaries, or to their estate, except that if the person insured be a minor or otherwise not competent to give a valid release, such benefits may be made payable to their parent, guardian or other person actually supporting the insured, designated beneficiary, or beneficiaries. The policy may also provide that all or a portion of any indemnities provided by any such policy on account of hospital, nursing, medical or surgical services may with the consent of the insured be paid directly to the hospital or person rendering such services, but the policy may not require that the services be rendered by a particular hospital or person. Payment so made shall discharge the obligation of the insurer with respect to the amount of insurance so paid.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 509.6.

191—35.7(509) General filing requirements.

35.7(1) All filings submitted to the Iowa division of insurance must be accompanied by a prepaid self-addressed envelope large enough to contain all copies of material requested to be returned.

35.7(2) All filings must be accompanied by a cover letter in duplicate which gives the form numbers, titles, effective date of the filing and a brief identifying description of the forms submitted. If the filing amends or changes a prior filing, the previous provisions and new provisions should be described in the cover letter with an explanation for the changes. The date of home state approval or acknowledgment should be included in the cover letter. Home state approval is a prerequisite to review by the division unless the form will not be used in the state of domicile. Any differences between the filing submitted to Iowa and the filing approved in the domiciliary state should be explained.

35.7(3) A copy of each form for which approval is requested shall be transmitted with the filing. If the forms submitted refer to both life and accident and health coverages, the cover letter must be submitted in triplicate with two copies of each form for which approval is requested.

35.7(4) Each filing submitted to the insurance division for approval shall conform to the applicable requirements of Iowa Code chapter 509 and shall be accompanied by a certification of the general counsel or an officer of the submitting company that to the best of their knowledge and belief the policy form is in compliance with the insurance laws of Iowa and these rules.

35.7(5) Each filing must be submitted to the division of insurance not less than 60 days prior to the effective date of the filing. Any deficiencies or discrepancies in the filing will delay final approval. In case of disapproval, the company will be notified by the division.

35.7(6) Any insured or established organization with one or more insureds among its members may file a written request with the commissioner for a hearing on a proposed form filing. A request for hearing must be filed within 20 days of receipt of the form filing by the commissioner.

35.7(7) The commissioner of insurance will hold the hearing within 20 days after receipt of the written demand for a hearing and will give not less than 10 days' written notice of the time and place of the hearing to the person or association filing the demand, to the filing insurer or organization, and to any other person requesting notice. The commissioner of insurance may suspend or postpone the effective date of the proposed filing pending such hearing.

191—35.8 to **35.19** Reserved.

191—35.20(509A) Life and health self-funded plans.

35.20(1) *Scope.* This rule applies to life and accident and health self-funded plans for the state of Iowa, political subdivisions of the state, school corporations, and all other public bodies in the state.

35.20(2) *Minimum plan standards.* Self-funded life plans subject to this rule shall meet the requirements of Iowa Code sections 509.1, 509.2, 509.4, and 509.15 and rules thereunder. Self-funded accident and health plans subject to this rule shall meet the requirements of Iowa Code sections 509.1 and 509.3 and rules thereunder.

In order to assure that a self-funded life or health plan is able to cover all reasonably anticipated expenses and to avoid liability for the public body, a self-funded health or life plan shall provide that:

a. An annual report showing the starting and ending balance of the fund, deposits of monthly accrual rates and other assets of the fund, and the amount and nature of all disbursements from the fund shall be prepared and submitted to the governing body of the public body. An annual report shall be made to show a separate accounting to reflect all required reserves.

b. Monthly accrual rates shall be established at a satisfactory level to provide funds to cover all claims, reserves, and expenses to operate the plan. Accrual rates shall be reevaluated annually. Accrual rates shall be funded solely through public body contributions or through a combination of employer and employee contributions.

c. A plan fund shall be established exclusively for the deposit of monthly accrual rates and other assets pertaining to the plan. After a self-funded health or life plan is established and as long as any claims may be made against the plan fund, all contributions shall be deposited as collected in the plan fund. The plan fund shall be disbursed only for plan expenses.

d. The following reserves shall be established in the plan fund:

(1) A reserve for claims that have been incurred by participants under the plan, but have not yet been presented for payment. The appropriate amount of this reserve shall be on an actuarially sound basis as determined by an independent actuary, an insurance company, or a nonprofit health service corporation authorized pursuant to chapter 514.

(2) A claims fluctuation reserve for setting aside funds that become available during a month when claims are less than projected for that month. Funds shall be maintained and available for a month where claims exceed those projected for that month.

e. The public body shall obtain a fidelity bond as a guaranty of faithful operation of the self-funded plan by the public body, its officers, agents, and employees.

f. Disbursements from the plan fund shall be made only for the following specified plan expenses:

(1) Payment of claims.

(2) Cost of aggregate excess loss coverage.

(3) Cost of specific excess loss coverage.

(4) Bonding expenses.

(5) Payment of service fees applicable to plan design, payment of claims, materials explaining plan benefits, actuarial assistance, legal assistance, and accounting assistance.

(6) Other expenses directly related to the operation of the plan.

g. Aggregate excess loss coverage shall be obtained which will limit a public body's total claim liability for each year to not more than 125 percent of the level of claims liability as projected by an independent actuary or insurance company. A public body shall fund this potential additional liability of 25 percent by either allocating necessary funds from the operating fund of the general fund or by setting up an additional reserve in the operating fund. Specific excess loss coverage may also be obtained if a public body wishes to limit its total annual liability on claims for any one claimant.

35.20(3) *Plan shortfalls.* If the resources of any self-funded plan subject to this rule are not adequate to fully cover all claims under that plan, then the public body sponsoring that plan shall make up the shortfall from other resources.

35.20(4) *Confidentiality.* Information held by the plan administrator of a self-funded plan shall be kept confidential. An employee or agent of the plan administrator shall not use or disclose any information to any person, except to the extent necessary to administer claims or as otherwise authorized by law.

191—35.21(509) Review of certificates issued under group policies.

35.21(1) *Nondiscretionary groups.* A certificate of coverage delivered in this state under a group life or accident and health insurance policy issued to a group substantially as described in Iowa Code section 509.1, subsections (1) to (7), shall not be reviewed by the commissioner if the policy is issued outside of this state.

35.21(2) *Discretionary groups.* A certificate of coverage delivered in this state under a group life or accident and health insurance policy issued to a group not substantially as described in Iowa Code section 509.1, subsections (1) to (7), shall not be reviewed by the commissioner if the policy is issued outside of this state and if the policy is issued or offered in a state which has reviewed and approved the policy under a statute substantially similar to Iowa Code section 509.1(8).

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 509.1, 509.6, and 509A.14.

LARGE GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

191—35.22(509) Purpose. This division of Chapter 35 implements the requirements of Pub.L. 104-191, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and Iowa Code section 509.3 for large group health insurance coverage.

191—35.23(509) Definitions.

"Affiliation period" means a period of time that must expire before health insurance coverage provided by an HMO becomes effective, and during which the HMO is not required to provide benefits.

"Beneficiary" has the meaning given the term under Section 3(8) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), which states, "a person designated by a participant, or by the terms of an employee benefit plan, who is or may become entitled to a benefit" under the plan.

"Bona fide association" means, with respect to group health insurance coverage offered in Iowa, an association that meets the following conditions:

1. Has been actively in existence for at least five years.
2. Has been formed and maintained in good faith for purposes other than obtaining insurance.

3. Does not condition membership in the association on any health status-related factor relating to an individual including an employee of an employer or a dependent of any employee.

4. Makes health insurance coverage offered through the association available to all members regardless of any health status-related factor relating to the members or individuals eligible for coverage through a member.

5. Does not make health insurance coverage offered through the association available other than in connection with a member of the association.

"Carrier" means an entity subject to the insurance laws and regulations of this state, or subject to the jurisdiction of the commissioner, that contracts or offers to contract to provide, deliver, arrange for, pay for, or reimburse any of the costs of health care services, including an insurance company offering sickness and accident plans, a health maintenance organization, a nonprofit health service corporation, or any other entity providing a plan of health insurance, health benefits or health services.

"COBRA" means Title X of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, as amended.

"Commissioner" means the commissioner of insurance.

"Continuation coverage" means coverage under a COBRA continuation provision or a similar state program. Coverage provided by a plan that is subject to a COBRA continuation provision or similar state program, but that does not satisfy all the requirements of that provision or program, will be deemed to be continuation coverage if it allows an individual to elect to continue coverage for a period of at least 18 months. Continuation coverage does not include coverage under a conversion policy required to be offered to an individual upon exhaustion of continuation coverage, nor does it include continuation coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

"Creditable coverage" means health benefits or coverage provided to an individual under any of the following:

1. A group health plan.
2. Health insurance coverage.
3. Part A or Part B Medicare pursuant to Title XVIII of the federal Social Security Act.
4. Medicaid pursuant to Title XIX of the federal Social Security Act, other than coverage consisting solely of benefits under Section 1928 of that Act.
5. 10 U.S.C. ch. 55.
6. A health or medical care program provided through the Indian Health Service or a tribal organization.
7. A state health benefits risk pool.
8. A health plan offered under 5 U.S.C. ch. 89.
9. A public health plan as defined under federal regulations.
10. A health benefit plan under Section 5(e) of the Peace Corps Act, 22 U.S.C. 2504(e).
11. An organized delivery system licensed by the director of public health.
12. A short-term limited durational policy.

"Director" means the director of public health appointed pursuant to Iowa Code section 135.2.

"Division" means the division of insurance.

"Eligible employee" means an individual who is eligible to enroll in group health insurance coverage offered to a group health plan maintained by an employer, in accordance with the terms of the group health plan.

"Employee" means any individual employed by an employer.

"Enrollment date" means the first day of coverage or, if there is a waiting period, the first day of the waiting period.

"Exhaustion of continuation coverage" means that an individual's continuation coverage ceases for any reason other than either failure of the individual to pay premiums on a timely basis, or for cause such as making a fraudulent claim or an intentional misrepresentation of a material fact in connection with the plan. An individual is considered to have exhausted continuation coverage if:

1. Coverage ceases due to the failure of the employer or other responsible entity to remit premiums on a timely basis, or

2. When the individual no longer resides, lives, or works in a service area of an HMO or similar program, whether or not within the choice of the individual, and there is no other continuation coverage available to the individual.

"Group health plan" means an employee welfare benefit plan as defined in Section 3(1) of the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, to the extent that the plan provides medical care including items and services paid for as medical care to employees or their dependents as defined under the terms of the plan directly or through insurance, reimbursement, or otherwise.

1. For purposes of this rule, "medical care" means amounts paid for any of the following:

- The diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease, or amounts paid for the purpose of affecting a structure or function of the body.
- Transportation primarily for and essential to medical care referred to in this definition.
- Insurance covering medical care referred to in this definition.

2. For purposes of this division, a plan, fund, or program established or maintained by a partnership which, but for this paragraph, would not be an employee welfare benefit plan, shall be treated as an employee welfare benefit plan which is a group health plan to the extent that the plan, fund, or program provides medical care, including items and services paid for as medical care, for present or former partners in the partnership or to the dependents of such partners, as defined under the terms of the plan, fund, or program, either directly or through insurance, reimbursement, or otherwise.

3. With respect to a group health plan, the term "employer" includes a partnership with respect to a partner.

4. With respect to a group health plan the term "participant" includes the following:

- With respect to a group health plan maintained by a partnership, an individual who is a partner in the partnership.
- With respect to a group health plan maintained by a self-employed individual, under which one or more of the self-employed individual's employees are participants, the self-employed individual, if that individual is, or may become, eligible to receive benefits under the plan or the individual's dependents may be eligible to receive benefits under the plan.

"Health insurance coverage" or *"Health insurance plan"* means benefits consisting of health care provided directly, through insurance or reimbursement, or otherwise and including items and services paid for as health care under a hospital or health service policy or certificate, hospital or health service plan contract, or health maintenance organization contract offered by a carrier.

1. "Health insurance coverage" does not include any of the following:

- Coverage for accident only, or disability income insurance.
- Coverage issued as a supplement to liability insurance.
- Liability insurance, including general liability insurance and automobile liability insurance.
- Workers' compensation or similar insurance.
- Automobile medical payment insurance.
- Credit-only insurance.
- Coverage for on-site medical clinic care.

- Other similar insurance coverage, specified in federal regulations, under which benefits for medical care are secondary or incidental to other insurance benefits.
- Flexible spending accounts.

2. "Health insurance coverage" does not include benefits provided under a separate policy as follows:

- Limited scope dental or vision benefits.
- Benefits for long-term care, nursing home care, home health care, or community-based care.
- Short-term limited durational insurance.
- Any other similar, limited benefits as provided by rule of the commissioner.
- Stop loss insurance coverage.

3. "Health insurance coverage" does not include benefits offered as independent noncoordinated benefits as follows:

- Coverage only for a specified disease or illness;
- Hospital indemnity or other fixed indemnity insurance.

4. "Health insurance coverage" does not include Medicare supplemental health insurance as defined under Section 1882(g)(1) of the federal Social Security Act, coverage supplemental to the coverage provided under 10 U.S.C. ch. 55, and similar supplemental coverage provided under insurance coverage.

5. "Group health insurance coverage" means health insurance coverage offered in connection with a group health plan.

"Health maintenance organization" or *"HMO"* means a federally qualified health maintenance organization as defined in Section 1301(a) of the Public Health Services Act or an organization licensed under Iowa Code section 514B.5.

"Large employer" means an employer employing two or more employees and which does not meet the definition of small employer under Iowa Code section 513B.2(16).

"Late enrollee" means an individual, other than one who enrolls during a special enrollment period, who enrolls under a health benefit plan or health insurance coverage in connection with which it is issued, other than during the first period in which the individual is eligible to enroll under terms of the health benefit plan or health insurance coverage.

"Network plan" means health insurance coverage of a health insurance issuer under which the financing and delivery of medical care including items and services paid for as medical care are provided, in whole or in part, through a defined set of providers under contract with the carrier.

"Organized delivery system" or *"ODS"* means an organized delivery system licensed by the director.

"Plan year" means the year that is designated as the plan year in the plan document of a group health plan, except that if the plan document does not designate a plan year or if there is no plan document, the plan year is:

1. The deductible/limit year used under the plan.
2. If the plan does not impose deductibles or limits on a yearly basis, the plan year is the policy year.
3. If the plan does not impose deductibles or limits on a yearly basis, and either the plan is not insured or the insurance policy is not renewed on an annual basis, the plan year is the employer's taxable year.

"Preexisting condition exclusion" means, with respect to health insurance coverage, a limitation or exclusion of benefits relating to a condition based on the fact that the condition was present before the date of enrollment for such coverage, whether or not any medical advice, diagnosis, care, or treatment was recommended or received before such date. A preexisting condition exclusion includes any exclusion applicable to an individual as a result of information that is obtained relating to an individual's health status before the individual's first day of coverage, such as a condition identified as a result of a preenrollment questionnaire or physical examination given to the individual, or review of medical records relating to the preenrollment period.

"Short-term limited duration insurance" means health insurance coverage provided under a contract with a carrier that has an expiration date specified in the contract, taking into account any extensions that may be elected by the policyholder without the carrier's consent, that is, within 12 months of the date the contract becomes effective.

"Significant break in coverage" means a period of 63 consecutive days during all of which the individual does not have any creditable coverage, except that neither a waiting period nor an affiliation period is taken into account in determining a significant break in coverage.

"Special enrollment period" means a period other than the first period in which an eligible employee or a dependent is eligible to enroll under the terms of group health insurance coverage in connection with which it is issued, without regard to other enrollment periods defined under the health insurance coverage.

"Waiting period" means, with respect to group health insurance coverage and an eligible employee or a dependent who is potentially eligible for coverage under the plan, the period that must pass with respect to the individual before the individual is eligible to be covered for benefits under the terms of the plan.

191—35.24(509) Eligibility to enroll.

35.24(1) A carrier or an organized delivery system offering group health insurance coverage shall not establish rules for eligibility, including continued eligibility, of an individual to enroll under the terms of the coverage based on any of the following health status-related factors in relation to the individual or a dependent of the individual:

a. Health status.
b. Medical condition, including both physical and mental conditions.
c. Claims experience.
d. Receipt of health care.
e. Medical history.
f. Genetic information.
g. Evidence of insurability, including conditions arising out of acts of domestic violence.
h. Disability.

35.24(2) Subrule 35.24(1) does not require group health insurance coverage to provide particular benefits other than those provided under the terms of the coverage, and does not prevent a coverage from establishing limitations or restrictions on the amount, level, extent, or nature of the benefits or coverage for similarly situated individuals enrolled in the coverage.

35.24(3) Rules for eligibility to enroll under group health insurance coverage include rules defining any applicable waiting or affiliation periods for such enrollment.

35.24(4) A carrier or organized delivery system offering health insurance coverage shall not require an individual, as a condition of enrollment or continued enrollment under the coverage, to pay a premium or contribution which is greater than a premium or contribution for a similarly situated individual enrolled in the coverage on the basis of a health status-related factor in relation to the individual or to a dependent of an individual enrolled under the coverage. This subrule shall not be construed to do either of the following:

a. Restrict the amount that an employer may be charged for health insurance coverage.

b. Prevent a carrier or organized delivery system offering group health insurance coverage from establishing premium discounts or rebates or modifying otherwise applicable copayments or deductibles in return for adherence to programs of health promotion and disease prevention.

35.24(5) A carrier or organized delivery system shall not modify a health insurance coverage with respect to an employer or any eligible employee or dependent through riders, endorsements or other means, to restrict or exclude coverage or benefits for specific diseases, medical conditions, or services otherwise covered by the health insurance coverage.

191—35.25(509) Special enrollments.

35.25(1) A carrier or organized delivery system shall permit individuals to enroll for coverage under terms of a health benefit plan, without regard to other enrollment dates permitted under the group health insurance coverage, if an eligible employee requests enrollment or, if the group health insurance coverage makes coverage available to dependents, on behalf of a dependent who is eligible but not enrolled under the group health insurance coverage, during the special enrollment period, which shall be 30 days following an event described in subrules 35.25(2) or 35.25(3) with respect to the individual for whom enrollment is requested. A carrier or organized delivery system may impose enrollment requirements that are otherwise applicable under terms of the group health insurance coverage to individuals requesting immediate enrollment.

35.25(2) An individual, who previously had other coverage for medical care and for whom an eligible employee declined coverage under the group health insurance coverage, may be enrolled during a special enrollment period if the individual has lost the other coverage for medical care and:

a. If required by the group health insurance coverage, the eligible employee stated in writing when declining the coverage, after being given a notice of the requirement form, and the consequences of failure to submit a written statement that coverage was declined because the individual had coverage for medical care under another group health insurance coverage, group health plan, or otherwise; and

b. When enrollment was declined for the individual:

(1) The individual had coverage under a COBRA continuation provision and the coverage has been exhausted; or

(2) The individual had coverage other than under a COBRA continuation provision and the coverage has been terminated due to loss of eligibility for the coverage, including loss of coverage as a result of legal separation, divorce, death, termination of employment, reduction in the number of hours of employment and any loss of eligibility after a period that is measured by reference to any of the foregoing, or termination of employer contributions toward the other coverage.

c. For purposes of subparagraph 35.25(2)*"b"*(2):

(1) Loss of eligibility for the coverages does not include loss of eligibility due to the eligible employee's or dependent's failure to make timely premium payments or termination of coverage for cause such as making a fraudulent claim or intentional misrepresentation of material fact in connection with the group health insurance coverage; and

(2) Employer contributions include contributions by any current or former employer of the individual or another person that was contributing to coverage for the individual.

(3) Exhaustion of COBRA continuation coverage means that an individual's COBRA continuation coverage ceases for any reason other than either failure of the individual to pay premiums on a timely basis, or for cause, such as making a fraudulent claim or an intentional misrepresentation of a material fact in connection with the plan. An individual is considered to have exhausted COBRA continuation coverage if the coverage ceases.

35.25(3) If the eligible employee has previously declined enrollment under the group health insurance coverage but acquires a dependent through marriage, birth, adoption or placement for adoption, the eligible employee or dependent may be enrolled during the special enrollment period with respect to the individual.

35.25(4) Enrollment of the eligible employee or dependent is effective not later than the first day of the calendar month or, for a newborn or adopted child, on the date of birth, adoption, or placement for adoption.

191—35.26(509) Group health insurance coverage policy requirements.

35.26(1) Group health insurance coverage subject to the rules in this division is renewable with respect to all eligible employees or their dependents at the option of the employer, except for one or more of the following reasons:

a. The health insurance coverage sponsor fails to pay or to make timely payments of premiums or contributions pursuant to the terms of the health insurance coverage.

b. The health insurance coverage sponsors, performs an act or practice constituting fraud or makes an intentional misrepresentation of a material fact under the terms of the coverage.

c. Noncompliance with the carrier's or organized delivery system's minimum participation requirements or employer contribution requirements.

d. For a network plan, no enrollees connected to the plan live, reside, or work in the service area of the issuer.

e. A carrier or ODS may choose to discontinue offering and cease to renew a particular type of health insurance coverage in the large group market if the carrier does all of the following:

(1) Provides advance notice of its decision to discontinue the plan to the commissioner or director a minimum of three days prior to the notice for affected employers, participants, and beneficiaries.

(2) Provides notice of its decision not to renew a plan to all affected employers, participants, and beneficiaries no less than 90 days prior to nonrenewal of a plan.

(3) Offers to each plan sponsor of the discontinued coverage the option to purchase any other coverage currently offered by the carrier or ODS to other employers in this state.

(4) Acts uniformly, in opting to discontinue the coverage and in offering the option under subparagraph 35.26(1)*"e"*(3), without regard to the claims experience of the sponsors under the discontinued coverage or to a health status-related factor relating to any participants or beneficiaries covered or new participants or beneficiaries who may become eligible for the coverage.

f. A decision by the carrier or ODS to discontinue offering and cease to renew all of its health insurance delivered or issued for delivery to employers in this state shall do all of the following:

(1) Provide advance notice of its decision to discontinue such coverage to the commissioner or director. Notice to the commissioner or director, at a minimum, shall be no less than three days prior to the notice provided for in subparagraph 35.26(1)*"f"*(2) to affected employers, participants, and beneficiaries.

(2) Provide notice of its decision not to renew such coverage to all affected employers, participants, and beneficiaries no less than 180 days prior to the nonrenewal of the coverage.

(3) Discontinue all health insurance coverage issued or delivered for issuance to employers in this state and cease renewal of such coverage.

g. The membership of an employer in a bona fide association, which is the basis for the coverage which is provided through such association, ceases, but only if the termination of coverage under this subrule occurs uniformly without regard to any health status-related factor relating to any covered individual.

h. The commissioner or director finds that the continuation of the coverage is not in the best interests of the policyholders or certificate holders, or would impair the carrier's or ODS's ability to meet its contractual obligations.

i. At the time of coverage renewal, a carrier or ODS may modify the health insurance coverage for a product offered under group health insurance coverage in the group market, if such modification is consistent with the laws of this state and is effective on a uniform basis among group health insurance coverage with that product.

35.26(2) A carrier or ODS that elects not to renew health insurance coverage under 35.26(1)*"f"* shall not write any new business in the group market in this state for a period of five years after the date of notice to the commissioner or director.

35.26(3) This rule applies only to a carrier or ODS doing business in one established geographic service area of the state and the carrier's or ODS's operations in that service area.

35.26(4) Preexisting condition exclusions.

a. A carrier or ODS, with respect to a participant or beneficiary, may impose a preexisting condition exclusion only as follows:

(1) The exclusion relates to a condition, whether physical or mental, regardless of the cause of the condition, for which medical advice, diagnosis, care, or treatment was recommended or received within the six-month period ending on the enrollment date. However, genetic information shall not be treated as a condition under this subparagraph in the absence of a diagnosis of the condition related to such information.

(2) The exclusion extends for a period of not more than 12 months, or 18 months in the case of a late enrollee, after the enrollment date.

(3) The period of any such preexisting condition exclusion is reduced by the aggregate of the periods of creditable coverage applicable to the participant or beneficiary as of the enrollment date.

b. A carrier or ODS offering group health insurance coverage shall not impose any preexisting condition as follows:

(1) In the case of a child who is adopted or placed for adoption before attaining 18 years of age and who, as of the last day of the 30-day period beginning on the date of the adoption or placement for adoption, is covered under creditable coverage. This subparagraph shall not apply to coverage before the date of such adoption or placement for adoption.

(2) In the case of an individual who, as of the last day of the 30-day period beginning with the date of birth, is covered under creditable coverage.

(3) Relating to pregnancy as a preexisting condition.

c. A carrier or ODS shall waive any waiting period applicable to a preexisting condition exclusion or limitation period with respect to particular services under health insurance coverage for the period of time an individual was covered by creditable coverage, provided that the creditable coverage was continuous to a date not more than 63 days prior to the effective date of the new coverage. Any period that an individual is in a waiting period for any coverage under group health insurance coverage, or is in an affiliation period, shall not be taken into account in determining the period of continuous coverage. A health maintenance organization that does not use preexisting condition limitations in any of its health insurance coverage may impose an affiliation period. For purposes of this paragraph, "affiliation period" means a period of time not to exceed 60 days for new entrants and not to exceed 90 days for late enrollees during which no premium shall be collected and coverage issued is not effective, so long as the affiliation period is applied uniformly, without regard to any health status-related factors.

d. A group health plan, carrier, or ODS offering group health insurance under the plan may not impose a preexisting condition exclusion with respect to a participant or dependent of the participant before notifying the participant under rule 35.29(509).

191—35.27(509) Methods of counting creditable coverage.

35.27(1) For purposes of reducing any preexisting condition exclusion period, a group health plan, carrier, or ODS offering group health insurance coverage shall determine the amount of an individual's creditable coverage by using the standard method described in paragraph 35.27(1)*"a,"* except that the plan, carrier or ODS may use the alternative method under paragraph 35.27(1)*"b"* with respect to any or all of the categories of benefits described under paragraph 35.27(1)*"d."*

a. Under the standard method, a group health plan, health insurance carrier, or an ODS offering group health insurance coverage shall determine the amount of creditable coverage without regard to the specific benefits included in the coverage.

(1) For purposes of reducing the preexisting condition exclusion period, a group health plan, health insurance carrier, or an ODS offering group health insurance coverage shall determine the amount of creditable coverage by counting all the days that the individual has under one or more types of creditable coverage. If on a particular day, an individual has creditable coverage from more than one source, all the creditable coverage on that day is counted as one day. Further, any days in a waiting period for a plan or policy are not creditable coverage under the plan or policy.

(2) Days of creditable coverage that occur before a significant break in coverage are not required to be counted.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provisions of paragraph 35.27(1)*"b,"* for purposes of reducing a preexisting condition exclusion period, a group health plan, a health insurance carrier, or an ODS offering group health insurance coverage may determine the amount of creditable coverage in any other manner that is at least as favorable to the individual as the method set forth in paragraph 35.27(1)*"b."*

b. Under the alternative method, a group health plan, a health insurance carrier, or an ODS offering group health insurance coverage shall determine the amount of creditable coverage based on coverage within any category of benefits described in paragraph 35.27(1)*"d"* and not based on coverage. The plan may apply a different preexisting condition exclusion period with respect to each category and may apply a different preexisting condition exclusion period for benefits that are not within any category. The creditable coverage determined for a category of benefits applies only for purposes of reducing the preexisting condition exclusion period with respect to that category. An individual's creditable coverage for benefits that are not within any category for which the alternative method is being used is determined under the standard method of paragraph 35.27(1)*"a."*

c. A plan, carrier, or ODS using the alternative method is required to apply it uniformly to all participants and beneficiaries in the plan or policy. The use of the alternative method must be set forth in the plan.

d. The alternative method for counting creditable coverage may be used for coverage for any of the following categories of benefits:

(1) Mental health.

(2) Substance abuse treatment.

(3) Prescription drugs.

(4) Dental care.

(5) Vision care.

e. If the alternative method is used, the plan is required to:

(1) State prominently that the plan is using the alternative method of counting creditable coverage in disclosure statements concerning the plan, and state this to each enrollee at the time of enrollment under the plan;

(2) Include in these statements a description of the effect of using the alternative method, including an identification of the category's uses; and

(3) Count creditable coverage within a category if any level of benefits is provided within the category.

191—35.28(509) Certificates of creditable coverage.

35.28(1) Group health plans, carriers, or ODSs shall issue certificates of creditable coverage to persons losing coverage. A group health plan, carrier, or ODS required to provide a certificate under this rule for an individual is deemed to have satisfied the certification requirements for that individual if another party provides the certificate, but only to the extent that information relating to the individual's creditable coverage and waiting or affiliation period is provided by the other party. Certificates shall be issued within a reasonable amount of time following termination to employees and dependents:

a. Automatically upon the termination of an individual's group coverage;

b. Automatically upon the termination of COBRA coverage;

c. Upon request within 24 months after coverage ends.

35.28(2) Certificates in writing. Certificates of coverage must be in writing unless all of the following conditions are met:

a. The individual requesting the certificate is not entitled to receive a certificate;

b. The individual requests that the certificate be sent to another plan, carrier, or ODS;

c. The plan, carrier, or ODS receiving the certificate agrees to accept the information through means other than a written certificate;

d. The plan or carrier receiving the certificate receives the certificate within a reasonable amount of time.

35.28(3) Required information. The certificate shall include the following information:

a. The date the certificate is issued;

b. The name of the group plan providing coverage;

c. The name of the employee or dependent to whom the certificate applies, other relevant identifying information, and the name of the employee if the certificate is for a dependent;

d. The plan administrator's name, address and telephone number;

e. A telephone number to call for further information if different from above;

f. Either a statement that the person has at least 18 months' creditable coverage without a significant break of coverage or the date any waiting period and creditable coverage began;

g. The date creditable coverage ended or an indication that the coverage is in force.

35.28(4) Family information. Information for families may be combined on one certificate. Any differences in creditable coverages shall be clearly delineated.

35.28(5) Dependent coverage transition rule. A group health plan, carrier, or ODS that does not maintain dependent data is deemed to have satisfied the requirement to issue dependent certificates by naming the employee and specifying that the coverage on the certificate is for dependent coverage.

35.28(6) Delivering certificates. The certificate shall be given to the individual, plan, carrier, or ODS requesting the certificate. The certificates may be sent by first-class mail. When a dependent's last-known address differs from the employee's last-known address, a separate certificate shall be provided to the dependent at the dependent's last-known address. Separate certificates may be mailed together to the same location.

35.28(7) A group health plan, carrier, or ODS shall establish a procedure for individuals to request and receive certificates.

35.28(8) A certificate is not required to be furnished until the group health plan, carrier, or ODS knows or should have known that dependent's coverage terminated.

35.28(9) Demonstrating creditable coverage. An individual has the right to demonstrate creditable coverage, waiting periods, and affiliation periods when the accuracy of the certificate is contested or a certificate is unavailable. A group health plan, carrier, or ODS shall consider information obtained by it or presented on behalf of an individual to determine whether the individual has creditable coverage.

191—35.29(509) Notification requirements.

35.29(1) A group health plan, carrier, or ODS shall provide written notice to the employee and dependents that includes the following:

a. The existence of any preexisting condition exclusions.

b. A determination that the group health plan, carrier, or ODS intends to impose a preexisting condition exclusion and:

(1) The basis for the decision to do so;

(2) The length of time to which the exclusion will apply;

(3) The right of the employee or dependent to appeal a decision to impose a preexisting condition exclusion;

(4) The right of the person to demonstrate creditable coverage including the right of the person to request a certificate from a prior group health plan, carrier, or ODS and a statement that the current group health plan, carrier, or ODS will assist in obtaining the certificate.

c. That the group health plan, carrier, or ODS will use the alternative method of counting creditable coverage.

d. Special enrollment rights when an employee declines coverage for the employee or dependents.

35.29(2) A group health plan, carrier, or ODS shall provide written notice to the employee and dependents of a modification of a prior creditable coverage decision when the group health plan, carrier, or ODS subsequently determines either no or less creditable coverage existed provided that the group health plan, carrier, or ODS acts according to its initial determination until the final determination is made.

191—35.30(509) Mental health benefits.

35.30(1) A carrier or organized delivery system offering mental health benefits shall not set annual or lifetime dollar limits on mental health benefits that are lower than limits for medical and surgical benefits. Health insurance coverage that does not impose an annual or lifetime dollar limit on medical and surgical benefits shall not impose a dollar limit on mental health benefits.

35.30(2) This rule does not apply to benefits for substance abuse or chemical dependency. This rule does not apply to health insurance coverage if costs increase 1 percent or more due to the application of these requirements. The calculation and notification requirements of the 1 percent exemption shall be performed pursuant to 45 CFR Part 146.136.

35.30(3) This rule applies to health insurance coverage for plan years beginning on or after January 1, 1998, and will cease to apply to benefits for services furnished on or after September 30, 2001.

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