

Administration is soliciting comments on the Model CHIP Employer Notice. A copy of the information collection request (ICR) may be obtained by contacting the office listed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted to the office shown in the **ADDRESSES** section on or before June 1, 2010.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments regarding the information collection request and burden estimates to G. Christopher Cosby, Office of Policy and Research, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room N-5647, Washington, DC 20210. Telephone: (202) 693-8410; Fax: (202) 219-4745. These are not toll-free numbers. Comments may also be submitted electronically to the following Internet e-mail address: [ebsa.opr@dol.gov](mailto:ebsa.opr@dol.gov).

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **I. Background**

On February 4, 2009, President Obama signed the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA, Pub. L. 111-3). Under ERISA section 701(f)(3)(B)(i)(I), PHS Act section 2701(f)(3)(B)(i)(I), and section 9801(f)(3)(B)(i)(I) of the Internal Revenue Code, as added by CHIPRA, an employer that maintains a group health plan in a State that provides medical assistance under a State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (SSA), or child health assistance under a State child health plan under title XXI of the SSA, in the form of premium assistance for the purchase of coverage under a group health plan, is required to make certain disclosures. Specifically, the employer is required to notify each employee of potential opportunities currently available in the State in which the employee resides for premium assistance under Medicaid and CHIP for health coverage of the employee or the employee's dependents.

ERISA section 701(f)(3)(B)(i)(II) requires the Department of Labor to provide employers with model language for the Employer CHIP Notices to enable them to timely comply with this requirement. The Model Employer CHIP Notice is required to include information on how an employee may contact the State in which the employee resides for additional information regarding potential opportunities for premium assistance, including how to apply for such assistance.

Section 311(b)(1)(D) of CHIPRA provides that the Departments of Labor

and Health and Human Services shall develop the initial Model Employer CHIP Notice under ERISA section 701(f)(3)(B)(i)(II), and the Department of Labor shall provide such notices to employers, by February 4, 2010. Moreover, each employer is required to provide the initial annual notices to such employer's employees beginning with the first plan year that begins after the date on which the initial model notices are first issued. The ICR relates to the Model Employer CHIP Notice.

On January 26, 2010, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the Model Employer CHIP Notice under OMB Control Number 1210-0137 pursuant to the emergency procedures for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-13, 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) and 5 CFR 1320.13. On February 4, 2010, the Department published a **Federal Register** notice (75 FR 5808) announcing the availability of the Model Employer CHIP Notice on its Web site. OMB's approval of the notice currently is schedule to expire on July 31, 2010.

##### **II. Current Actions**

This notice requests public comment pertaining to the Department's request for extension of OMB's approval of the Model CHIP Employer Notice (OMB Control Number 1210-0137). After considering comments received in response to this notice, the Department intends to submit an ICR to OMB for continuing approval. No change to the existing ICR is proposed or made at this time. The Department notes that an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, an information collection unless it displays a valid OMB control number. A summary of the ICR and the current burden estimates follows:

*Agency:* Employee Benefits Security Administration.

*Title of Collection:* Model Employer CHIP Notice.

*Type of Collection:* New.

*OMB Control Number:* 1210-0137.

*Frequency of Collection:* On occasion.

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households; Business or other for-profit; Not-for-profit institutions.

*Total Estimated Number of Respondents:* 7,056,000.

*Total Estimated Number of Responses:* 203,794,701.

*Total Estimated Annual Burden Hours:* 1,053,000.

*Total Net Estimated Annual Costs Burden (other than hourly costs):* \$25,271,000.

##### **III. Desired Focus of Comments**

The Department of Labor (Department) is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., by permitting electronic submissions of responses.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the ICR for OMB approval of the extension of the information collection; they will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: March 29, 2010.

**Joseph S. Piacentini,**

*Director, Office of Policy and Research, Employee Benefits Security Administration.*

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#### **DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

##### **Employee Benefits Security Administration**

##### **Proposed Extension of Information Collection Request Submitted for Public Comment; COBRA Notification Requirements—American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 as Amended**

**AGENCY:** Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Labor (the Department), in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA 95) (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)), provides the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and continuing collections of information. This helps the Department assess the impact of its information collection requirements and minimize the reporting burden on the public and helps the public understand the

Department's information collection requirements and provide the requested data in the desired format. Currently, the Employee Benefits Security Administration is soliciting comments on the revision of the information collection provisions of its final rule at 29 CFR part 2590, Health Care Continuation Coverage to reflect the hour and cost burden associated with the COBRA notification requirements under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 as amended by the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2010 (Pub. L. 111–118). A copy of the information collection request (ICR) may be obtained by contacting the office listed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted to the office shown in the **ADDRESSES** section on or before June 1, 2010.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments regarding the information collection request and burden estimates to G. Christopher Cosby, Office of Policy and Research, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room N–5647, Washington, DC 20210. Telephone: (202) 693–8410; Fax: (202) 219–4745. These are not toll-free numbers. Comments may also be submitted electronically to the following Internet e-mail address: [ebbsa.opr@dol.gov](mailto:ebbsa.opr@dol.gov).

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **I. Background**

The continuation coverage provisions of section 601 through 608 of ERISA (and parallel provisions of the Internal Revenue Code (Code)) generally require group health plans to offer qualified beneficiaries' the opportunity to elect continuation coverage following certain events that would otherwise result in the loss of coverage. Continuation coverage is a temporary extension of the qualified beneficiary's previous group health coverage. The right to elect continuation coverage allows individuals to maintain group health coverage under adverse circumstances and to bridge gaps in health coverage that otherwise could limit their access to health care.

COBRA provides the Secretary of Labor (the Secretary) with authority under section 608 of ERISA to carry out the continuation coverage provisions. The Conference Report that accompanied COBRA divided interpretive authority over the COBRA provisions between the Secretary and the Secretary of the Treasury (the Treasury) by providing that the

Secretary has the authority to issue regulations implementing the notice and disclosure requirements of COBRA, while the Treasury is authorized to issue regulations defining the required continuation coverage.

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 (Pub. L. 111–5). ARRA includes a requirement that the Secretary of Labor (the Secretary), in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Health and Human Services, develop model notices for use by group health plans and other entities that, pursuant to ARRA, must provide notices of the availability of premium reductions and additional election periods for health care continuation coverage. On December 19, 2009, President Obama signed the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2010 (Pub. L. 111–118), which amended the ARRA COBRA provisions by extending the availability of the health care continuation coverage premium reduction provided for COBRA and other health care continuation coverage, and the Department revised its model notices to reflect these amendments.

On January 12, 2010, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the revised model notices as a revision to OMB Control Number 1210–0123 under the emergency procedures for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104–13, 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) and 5 CFR 1320.13. On January 15, 2010, the Department published a **Federal Register** notice (75 FR 2562) announcing the availability of the revised model health care continuation coverage notices required by ARRA as amended on its Web site at <http://www.dol.gov/ebbsa/COBRAModelNotice.html>. OMB's approval of the revision currently is scheduled to expire on July 31, 2010.

##### **II. Current Actions**

This notice requests public comment pertaining to the Department's request for extension of OMB's approval of its revision to OMB Control Number 1210–0123 relating to the revised ARRA model notices. After considering comments received in response to this notice, the Department intends to submit an ICR to OMB for continuing approval. No change to the existing ICR is proposed or made at this time. The Department notes that an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, an information collection unless it displays a valid OMB control number. A

summary of the ICR and the current burden estimates follows:

*Agency:* Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor.

*Title:* COBRA Notification Requirements—American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 as amended.

*Type of Review:* Revision of a currently approved collection of information.

*OMB Number:* 1210–0123.

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households; Business or other for-profit; Not-for-profit institutions.

*Respondents:* 593,000.

*Frequency of Responses:* On occasion.

*Responses:* 38,115,000.

*Estimated Total Burden Hours:* None.

*Estimated Total Burden Cost (Operating and Maintenance):* \$34,500,000.

##### **III. Desired Focus of Comments**

The Department of Labor (Department) is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., by permitting electronic submissions of responses.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the ICR for OMB approval of the extension of the information collection; they will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: March 29, 2010.

**Joseph S. Piacentini,**

*Director, Office of Policy and Research, Employee Benefits Security Administration.*

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