



Important Changes to UC Benefits Programs for Pandemic Relief

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Departments of Labor and Treasury issued a rule extending the time periods during which participants may take certain actions relating to their group health plan coverage. The rule, "Extension of Certain Timeframes for Employee Benefit Plans, Participants and Beneficiaries Affected by the COVID-19 Outbreak," is published in the [Federal Register](#).

In addition, two guidance documents were issued after the rule described above, which allow employers, at their discretion, to (1) expand employees' and non-Medicare retirees' opportunities to make changes to their Section 125 benefit plans, which for UC includes the medical plans and the Health and Dependent Care (DepCare) Flexible Spending Arrangements ([Notice 2020-29](#)), and (2) to increase the amount that can be carried forward to the next plan year under the Health FSA ([Notice 2020-33](#)).

The UCR Health & Welfare Benefits team have been working closely with UCPath, the Office of General Counsel, the plan administrators and carriers, and their consulting partners to understand the impact of the new rule and guidance and develop implementation plans. The article "[Important changes to UC benefits programs for relief during the pandemic](#)" has been posted to UCnet to inform participants about the opportunities to make changes to their benefit plans.

The following changes will be allowed due to COVID-19 and participants are now able to request changes as of June 1, 2020. For more information and the details of the Benefit Plans changes, please visit the [new UCR Important Changes to UC Benefits / FSA Programs webpage](#).

Medical Plans

Until October, 28, 2020 (just before Open Enrollment), employees and non-Medicare retirees will have the option to:

- Enroll in new medical coverage
- Change plans or coverage level (e.g., self to family)
- Cancel coverage — For plans other than CORE the participant must submit [Form UBEN 230PDF](#) attesting that they have other coverage

UC Health Savings Plan

The exclusion of COVID-19 testing and telehealth services from the deductible and cost-sharing is retroactive to January 1, 2020.

Health and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs)

Until October 28, 2020 (just before Open Enrollment), employees will have the option to:

- Cancel your 2020 participation
- Enroll for 2020
- Change your 2020 election.

Health FSA

UC has been authorized to increase the amount that can be carried over from 2020 to 2021 from \$500 to \$550.

How Eligible Individuals Make Plan Changes

Eligible individuals are now able to request changes as of June 1, 2020.

The employee will contact the [UCPath Center](#) to request an event be opened. The employee will be asked a few questions to determine to which plans they are eligible to make changes.