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**HOUSE BILL 2481**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Volz, Bergquist, Robertson, and Macri

AN ACT Relating to waiving health benefit premiums in the public employees' benefits board; and reenacting and amending RCW 41.05.080.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 41.05.080 and 2023 c 312 s 1 and 2023 c 13 s 5 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

(1) Under the qualifications, terms, conditions, and benefits set by the public employees' benefits board:

(a)(i) Retired or disabled state employees, retired or disabled school employees, or retired or disabled employees of employer groups covered by this chapter may continue their participation in insurance plans and contracts after retirement or disablement.

(ii) The retired or disabled employees of employer groups whose contractual agreement with the authority terminates may continue their participation in insurance plans and contracts after the contractual agreement is terminated. The retired or disabled employees of employer groups whose contractual agreement with the authority terminates are not eligible for any subsidy provided under RCW 41.05.085;

(b) Separated employees may continue their participation in insurance plans and contracts if participation is selected immediately upon separation from employment;

(c) Surviving spouses, surviving state registered domestic partners, and dependent children of emergency service personnel killed in the line of duty may participate in insurance plans and contracts.

(2) Rates charged surviving spouses and surviving state registered domestic partners of emergency service personnel killed in the line of duty, retired or disabled employees, separated employees, spouses, or dependent children who are not eligible for parts A and B of medicare shall be based on the experience of the community-rated risk pool established under RCW 41.05.022.

(3) Rates charged to surviving spouses and surviving state registered domestic partners of emergency service personnel killed in the line of duty, retired or disabled employees, separated employees, spouses, or children who are eligible for parts A and B of medicare shall be calculated from a separate experience risk pool comprised only of individuals eligible for parts A and B of medicare; however, the premiums charged to medicare-eligible retirees and disabled employees shall be reduced by the amount of the subsidy provided under RCW 41.05.085, except as provided in subsection (1)(a)(ii) of this section.

(4) Surviving spouses, surviving state registered domestic partners, and dependent children of emergency service personnel killed in the line of duty and retired or disabled and separated employees shall be responsible for payment of premium rates developed by the authority which shall include the cost to the authority of providing insurance coverage including any amounts necessary for reserves and administration in accordance with this chapter. These self pay rates will be established based on a separate rate for the employee, the spouse, state registered domestic partners, and the children.

(5) When a person described in subsection (1)(a)(i), (b), or (c) of this section dies, the authority shall waive the payment of the decedent's premiums and any applicable premium surcharges for the medical, dental, or vision plan for the month in which the death occurred. The authority shall enroll any eligible surviving dependents in the same medical, dental, or vision plan that they had been enrolled in, which shall be made effective on the first day of the month in which the death occurred, and the eligible surviving dependent shall be responsible for the payment of premiums and any applicable premium surcharges for themselves and any other eligible dependents.

(6) The term "retired state employees" for the purpose of this section shall include but not be limited to members of the legislature whether voluntarily or involuntarily leaving state office.

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