

Summary of the COBRA Premium Reduction Provisions under ARRA, as Amended

President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) on February 17, 2009. The law, as amended on December 19, 2009 by the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2010, gives “Assistance Eligible Individuals” the right to pay reduced COBRA premiums for periods of coverage beginning on or after February 17, 2009 and can last up to fifteen (15) months.

To be considered an “Assistance Eligible Individual” and get reduced premiums you:

- **MUST** have a continuation coverage election opportunity related to an involuntary termination of employment that occurred at some time from September 1, 2008 through February 28, 2010;
- **MUST** elect such continuation coverage;
- **MUST NOT** be eligible for Medicare; AND
- **MUST NOT** be eligible for coverage under any other group health plan, such as a plan sponsored by a successor employer or a spouse’s employer.*

◆ IMPORTANT ◆

- ◇ If, after you elect COBRA and while you are paying the reduced premium, you become eligible for other group health plan coverage or Medicare you **MUST** notify the plan in writing. If you do not, you may be subject to a tax penalty.
- ◇ Electing the premium reduction disqualifies you for the Health Coverage Tax Credit. If you are eligible for the Health Coverage Tax Credit, which could be more valuable than the premium reduction, you will have received a notification from the IRS.
- ◇ The amount of the premium reduction is recaptured for certain high income individuals. If the amount you earn for the year is more than \$125,000 (or \$250,000 for married couples filing a joint federal income tax return) all or part of the premium reduction may be recaptured by an increase in your income tax liability for the year. If you think that your income may exceed the amounts above, you may wish to consider waiving your right to the premium reduction. For more information, consult your tax preparer or visit the IRS webpage on ARRA at www.irs.gov.

For general information regarding your plan’s COBRA coverage you can contact the Administrative Office of the Southwest Carpenters Health and Welfare Trust (contact information is in the letter which accompanies this notice).

For specific information related to your plan’s administration of the ARRA Premium Reduction or to notify the plan of your ineligibility to continue paying reduced premiums, contact the Administrative Office of the Southwest Carpenters Health and Welfare Trust (contact information is in the letter which accompanies this notice).

If you are denied treatment as an “Assistance Eligible Individual” you may have the right to have the denial reviewed. For more information regarding reviews or for general information about the ARRA Premium Reduction go to:
www.dol.gov/COBRA or call 1-866-444-EBSA (3272)

* Generally, this does not include coverage for only dental, vision, counseling, or referral services; coverage under a health flexible spending arrangement; or treatment that is furnished in an on-site medical facility maintained by the employer.