

STATE OF OHIO
DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

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Governor Signs Bill Extending COBRA, Changes Agent License Standards

Columbus, Ohio – Ohio Governor Ted Strickland signed House Bill 300 late yesterday, extending Ohio continuation (mini-COBRA) coverage from 12 months to 15 months so Ohioans who lose their jobs are able take full advantage of the federal subsidies available to help pay for the cost of mini-COBRA.

“I’m grateful that we were able to come together in a bipartisan manner to assist Ohio’s unemployed workers and enhance licensing and oversight of insurance agencies,” Strickland said. “This extension helps Ohioans who are struggling with the effects of this recession to continue receiving the health care they need to maintain healthy and productive lives.”

The bill, sponsored by Representatives Stephen Dyer and Jay Hottinger also brings Ohio into uniformity with the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) standards adopted by 46 other states related to insurance agent licensing and oversight.

Changes to agent license standards include:

A mandatory federal background check for licensure.

24 hours of Continuing Education, including three hours of ethics education, will be required for all major lines of authority.

The collection of licensure fees after applicant has passed exam instead of before.

The inactivation of an agent license if the agent does not apply for renewal and meet the requirements by the end of the renewal period or 30-day late filing period.

Waiving of pre-license education requirements if an individual applicant has earned a professional designation approved by the superintendent.

“This law will enhance Ohio’s insurance licensing standards, while at the same time, increasing consumer protection for Ohioans who purchase insurance products,” said Director Hudson. “The mini-COBRA changes will also temporarily allow those who lose their job to maintain their health insurance for a little while longer.”

The complete version of HB 300 can be found on the Ohio Department of Insurance Web site, www.insurance.ohio.gov. Ohioans with questions about the new law can call the Department’s consumer hotline at 1-800-686-1526.

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