

# December 19, 2016

Subject: Re: Improper Benefit Termination Notice  
Thanks Jed. Good work on this important issue.  
Charles Jackson

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 19, 2016, at 12:10 PM, Jed Dodd <doddjed@verizon.net<mailto:doddjed@verizon.net>> wrote:

All Amtrak General Chairmen,

Many of you have raised the issue of members being improperly notified that their health benefits have been terminated. We raised this issue at our last trustees meeting with Amtrak management and this is what was discovered:

1. When a member goes on a leave of absence for any reason, union, military, personal, their system automatically generates a COBRA letter which states that the benefits are terminated and how to purchase a continuation of the benefits.
2. Amtrak claims that the COBRA letter is automatic, handled by a third party administrator and is required by law. However, it does not supersede the collectively bargained extension for health benefits when members go on a leave of absence. When the benefit extension expires, the COBRA obligation flows back to the first date of the leave of absence.
3. Amtrak acknowledges that the employees who go on a leave of absence do not immediately lose their health benefits and that there is an extension for them.
4. At our urging, Amtrak will have the third party COBRA vendor put an additional notice in the package which indicates that health coverage is not terminated when a collective bargaining agreement provides for its continuance when on furlough or leave of absence. We are supposed to review the proposed letter shortly and hope to have this reform into place in about six weeks.

In the meantime when a member receives the notice of COBRA which indicates that their insurance has been cut it can be corrected by calling the Amtrak benefits department or one of us. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

In solidarity,

JMAC Labor Trustees

Jed Dodd  
Bill Bohne  
Mike McCarthy

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