



## Legislative Coordinating Commission

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### House

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Senator Gary Dahms  
Senator Chris Eaton  
Senator David Hann  
Senator James Metzen

**DATE:** January 18, 2013

**TO:** Members of the Legislative Coordinating Commission

**FROM:** Greg Hubinger

**RE:** Summary of proposed changes to the 2013 Benefit Book

This memo summarizes proposed changes to the "Legislative Plan for Employee Benefits and Policies," which establishes health insurance benefits, vacation and sick leave accrual policies, and numerous other benefits for legislative branch employees in the House, Senate, joint legislative agencies, and legislative commissions. The insurance, vacation, severance, and sick leave policies are effective when adopted by the LCC. Other provisions are effective when they are adopted by the respective Rules Committees of the House and Senate.

A staff group from the House, Senate, and various joint legislative agencies have met over the last several months to develop the proposed amendments to the Plan. A list of the staff who served on the Benefit Book group is included at the end of the summary. A copy of the Benefit Book in legislative format is also attached.

Most of the proposed changes are part of the insurance chapter, which largely reflects the insurance provisions of state labor contracts and compensation plans. There is also a change proposed to conform to a change in state statute. Finally, there is a section summarizing changes to clarify current practices, or establishing consistent policies among the appointing authorities.

### Conforming changes

- 1) **Voting leave.** (page 23). Comply with statutory changes providing for leave time during the entire day, and for voting in primary and general elections for legislative and congressional elections.
- 2) **Update insurance chapter.** (pages 29-56). Under Minnesota Statutes section 43A.18, subdivision 6, the LCC is responsible for establishing insurance coverage for staff and

members of the Legislature. Because the Legislature has traditionally decided to purchase insurance coverage through the State Employee Group Insurance Program (SEGIP), the LCC must adopt the insurance coverage that will become effective with the ratification of the state labor contracts and compensation plans.

The health, dental, life, and disability benefits provisions are initially bargained through a joint labor management committee that includes exclusive representatives from all the state's unions. Final bargaining is completed between the state and the exclusive representatives for each union. As a result, the insurance provisions themselves are generally consistent from contract to contract.

Changes to the insurance chapter to conform with the state labor contracts and plans include:

1. Co-pays, deductibles and co-insurance amount are increased
2. Several technical changes are made to definitions:
  - a. (Dependent) spouse: Must be "married under Minnesota law," previously provided "if not legally separated."
  - b. (Dependent) child: Provide coverage to age 26. Clarify that foster children must have been placed by an authorized placement agency, or by a judgment, decree, or other court order. For a step-child, the employee must be legally married to the child's legal parent or guardian.
  - c. (Dependent) Grandchildren. Continues provisions providing for dependent coverage for grandchildren who are adopted or placed in the legal custody of the employee. Clarifies that otherwise, dependent grandchildren are eligible if they have resided with the employee since birth, or if the grandchild is the child of the employee's unmarried child, the grandchild is eligible for coverage until age 19.

### Clarifications

These proposed changes are technical in nature, provide greater clarity, or indicate greater consistency in policies across legislative offices.

- 1) **Applicability of plan.** (page 1). Updates the list of legislative commissions covered by the plan.
- 2) **Eligibility for floating holiday.** (page 8). Clarifies that an employee must be in a vacation eligible position in order to earn floating holidays.
- 3) **Payroll year.** (pages 8, 11). Clarifies that for LCC employees the calendar year is the payroll year. The end of the calendar year is the deadline for using floating holidays and determining the end of year vacation leave balance.
- 4) **Calculating prior service for determining vacation accrual.** (page 12). The Legislature permits employees to include prior service from certain former employers to be counted when calculating the amount of vacation leave that is earned. This provision

clarifies that when temporary employees become permanent, they also must provide similar documentation within six months of their appointment.

- 5) **Use of vacation leave.** (page 13). We generally require that employees use vacation leave in at least quarter-hour increments. This clarification provides that smaller increments can be used if they have been accrued.
- 6) **Eligible use of sick leave.** (page 15). Reinstates a provision that was inadvertently deleted from a prior version of the Benefit Book. This provision permits a father or husband to take leave time related to birth or adoption of a child within one year of the event.
- 7) **Calculating severance.** (page 18). Clarifies that when calculating length of service for determining severance pay, that partial years are based on the number of months served.
- 8) **Severance pay to health care savings account.** (page 19). Reduces the threshold for paying severance from \$1,000 to \$250.

If you have any questions about these proposed changes, please feel free to call me at 651.296.2963.

Attach: Benefit Book

### **Benefit Book Staff Group**

The following participated in the staff group that developed the proposed changes to the Legislative Plan for Employee Benefits and Policies:

Kelly Knight, House of Representatives  
 Sydne Westorff, Senate  
 Tom Pender, House Research  
 Tom Bottern, Senate Counsel, Research, & Fiscal Analysis  
 Stephanie James, Senate Counsel, Research, & Fiscal Analysis  
 Michele Timmons, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
 Robbie LaFleur, Legislative Reference Library  
 Eric Jacobsen, Office of the Legislative Auditor  
 Diane Henry-Wangensteen, Legislative Coordinating Commission  
 Greg Hubinger, Legislative Coordinating Commission