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Lose your job? You may qualify for federal health insurance subsidies through Dec. 31, 2009

Salem, Oregon – Oregonians who lose their jobs through the end of 2009 may still qualify for federal subsidies to help pay health insurance premiums.

Nine months of subsidies are available as part of the federal economic stimulus package. This means that an eligible worker who loses a job *and* group health insurance on or before Dec. 31, 2009 could get help paying insurance premiums for nine months continuing into 2010.

The stimulus package pays 65 percent of premiums for most workers who involuntarily lose their jobs and who choose to continue their former employer's group coverage. The subsidy program requires that the former employer remain in business and continue to offer health insurance.

Federal and state laws already allow people who lose their jobs to continue the coverage for a limited time but they must pay the full costs of the insurance. Many can't afford to do so, which is where the subsidies help. For example, a family that may typically have to pay \$1,200 a month to continue an employer plan would pay \$420 monthly with the subsidy. A single employee who might normally pay \$400 monthly to keep his or her health insurance would pay \$140 a month with the subsidy.

People who lose their jobs should receive notices about the subsidy program with instructions on how to sign up from either their former employer or their former employer's insurance company.

Learn more about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and the health insurance help here: <http://insurance.oregon.gov/consumer/consumer-issues/federal-stimulus-info/federal-stimulus-info.html>

You may also call the Oregon Insurance Division at 503-947-7984 or toll-free at 1-888-877-4894.

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The Department of Consumer and Business Services is Oregon's largest business regulatory and consumer protection agency. For more information, visit www.dcbs.oregon.gov.