

§ 155.725 Enrollment periods under SHOP for plan years beginning prior to January 1, 2018.

(a) *General requirements.* The SHOP must ensure that enrollment transactions are sent to QHP issuers and that such issuers adhere to coverage effective dates in accordance with this section.

(b) *Rolling enrollment in the SHOP.* The SHOP must permit a qualified employer to purchase coverage for its small group at any point during the year. The employer's plan year must consist of the 12-month period beginning with the qualified employer's effective date of coverage, unless the plan is issued in a State that has elected to merge its individual and small group risk pools under section 1312(c)(3) of the Affordable Care Act, in which case the plan year will end on December 31 of the calendar year in which coverage first became effective.

(c) *Annual employer election period.* The SHOP must provide qualified employers with a standard election period prior to the completion of the employer's plan year and before the annual employee open enrollment period, in which the qualified employer may change its participation in the SHOP for the next plan year, including—

(1) The method by which the qualified employer makes QHPs available to qualified employees pursuant to § 155.705(b)(2) and (3);

(2) The employer contribution towards the premium cost of coverage;

(3) The level of coverage offered to qualified employees as described in § 155.705(b)(2) and (3); and

(4) The QHP or QHPs offered to qualified employees in accordance with § 155.705.

(d) *Annual employer election period notice.* The SHOP must provide notification to a qualified employer of the annual election period in advance of such period.

(e) *Annual employee open enrollment period.* (1) The SHOP must establish a standardized annual open enrollment period for qualified employees prior to the completion of the applicable qualified employer's plan year and after that employer's annual election period.

(2) Qualified employers in a Federally-facilitated SHOP must provide qualified employees with an annual open enrollment period of at least one week.

(f) *Annual employee open enrollment period notice.* The SHOP must provide notification to a qualified employee of the annual open enrollment period in advance of such period.

(g) *Newly qualified employees.* (1) In a State Exchange that does not use the Federal platform for SHOP functions, the following rules apply with respect to enrollment and coverage effective dates for newly qualified employees.

(i) The SHOP must provide an employee who becomes a qualified employee outside of the initial or annual open enrollment period an enrollment period beginning on the first day of becoming a qualified employee. A newly qualified employee must have at least 30 days from the beginning of his or her enrollment period to select a QHP. The enrollment period must end no sooner than 15

days prior to the date that any applicable employee waiting period longer than 45 days would end if the employee made a plan selection on the first day of becoming eligible.

(ii) The effective date of coverage for a QHP selection received by the SHOP from a newly qualified employee must always be the first day of a month, and must generally be determined in accordance with paragraph (h) of this section, unless the employee is subject to a waiting period consistent with § 147.116 of this subchapter, in which case the effective date may be on the first day of a later month, but in no case may the effective date fail to comply with § 147.116 of this subchapter.

(iii) Waiting periods in the SHOP are calculated beginning on the date the employee becomes a qualified employee who is otherwise eligible for coverage, regardless of when a qualified employer notifies the SHOP about a newly qualified employee.

(2) In a Federally-facilitated SHOP or in a State Exchange that uses the Federal platform for SHOP functions, the following rules apply with respect to enrollment and coverage effective dates for newly qualified employees.

(i) The SHOP must provide an employee who becomes a qualified employee outside of the initial or annual open enrollment period with a 30-day enrollment period beginning on the date the qualified employer notifies the SHOP about the newly qualified employee. Qualified employers must notify the SHOP about a newly qualified employee on or before the thirtieth day after the day that the employee becomes a newly qualified employee.

(ii) The effective date of coverage for a QHP selection received by the SHOP from a newly qualified employee is the first day of the month following plan selection, unless the employee is subject to a waiting period consistent with § 147.116 of this subchapter and paragraph (g)(2)(iii) of this section, in which case the effective date will be on the first day of the month following the end of the waiting period, but in no case may the effective date fail to comply with § 147.116 of this subchapter. If a newly qualified employee's waiting period ends on the first day of a month and the employee has already made a plan selection by that date, coverage must take effect on that date. If a newly qualified employee makes a plan selection on the first day of a month and any applicable waiting period has ended by that date, coverage must be effective on the first day of the following month. If a qualified employer with variable hour employees makes regularly having a specified number of hours of service per period, or working full-time, a condition of employee eligibility for coverage offered through the SHOP, any measurement period that the qualified employer elects to use under § 147.116(c)(3)(i) to determine whether an employee meets the applicable eligibility conditions with respect to coverage offered through the SHOP must not exceed 10 months, beginning on any date between the employee's start date and the first day of the first calendar month following the employee's start date.

(iii) Waiting periods in the SHOP are calculated beginning on the date the employee becomes a qualified employee who is otherwise eligible for coverage, regardless of when a qualified employer notifies the SHOP about a newly qualified employee, and must not exceed 60 days in length. Waiting periods must be 0, 15, 30, 45 or 60 days in length.

(h) *Initial and annual open enrollment effective dates.* (1) The SHOP must establish effective dates of coverage for qualified employees enrolling in coverage for the first time, and for qualified employees enrolling during the annual open enrollment period described in paragraph (e) of this section.

(2) For a group enrollment received by the Federally-facilitated SHOP from a qualified employer at the time of an initial group enrollment or renewal:

(i) Between the first and fifteenth day of any month, the Federally-facilitated SHOP must ensure a coverage effective date of the first day of the following month unless the employer opts for a later effective date within a quarter for which small group market rates are available.

(ii) Between the 16th and last day of any month, the Federally-facilitated SHOP must ensure a coverage effective date of the first day of the second following month unless the employer opts for a later effective date within a quarter for which small group market rates are available.

(i) *Renewal of coverage.* (1) If a qualified employee enrolled in a QHP through the SHOP remains eligible for enrollment through the SHOP in coverage offered by the same qualified employer, the SHOP may provide for a process under which the employee will remain in the QHP selected the previous year, unless—

(i) The qualified employee terminates coverage from such QHP in accordance with standards identified in § 155.430;

(ii) The qualified employee enrolls in another QHP if such option exists; or

(iii) The QHP is no longer available to the qualified employee.

(2) The SHOP may treat a qualified employer offering coverage through the SHOP as offering the same coverage under § 155.705(b)(3) at the same level of contribution under § 155.705(b)(11) unless:

(i) The qualified employer is no longer eligible to offer such coverage through the SHOP;

(ii) The qualified employer elects to offer different coverage or a different contribution through the SHOP;

(iii) The qualified employer withdraws from the SHOP; or

(iv) In the case of a qualified employer offering a single QHP, the single QHP is no longer available through the SHOP.

(j)(1) *Special enrollment periods.* The SHOP must provide special enrollment periods consistent with this section, during which certain qualified employees or a dependent of a qualified employee may enroll in QHPs and enrollees may change QHPs.

(2) The SHOP must provide a special enrollment period for a qualified employee or dependent of a qualified employee who:

(i) Experiences an event described in § 155.420(d)(1) (other than paragraph (d)(1)(ii)), or experiences an event described in § 155.420(d)(2), (4), (5), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), or (12);

(ii) Loses eligibility for coverage under a Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act or a State child health plan under title XXI of the Social Security Act; or

(iii) Becomes eligible for assistance, with respect to coverage under a SHOP, under such Medicaid plan or a State child health plan (including any waiver or demonstration project conducted under or in relation to such a plan).

(3) A qualified employee or dependent of a qualified employee who experiences a qualifying event described in paragraph (j)(2) of this section has:

(i) Thirty (30) days from the date of a triggering event described in paragraph (j)(2)(i) of this section to select a QHP through the SHOP; and

(ii) Sixty (60) days from the date of a triggering event described in paragraph (j)(2)(ii) or (iii) of this section to select a QHP through the SHOP;

(4) A dependent of a qualified employee is not eligible for a special election period if the employer does not extend the offer of coverage to dependents.

(5) The effective dates of coverage for special enrollment periods are determined using the provisions of § 155.420(b).

(6) Loss of minimum essential coverage is determined using the provisions of § 155.420(e).

(7) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in § 155.420(d), § 155.420(a)(4) and (d)(2)(i)(A) do not apply to special enrollment periods in the SHOP.

(k) *Limitation.* Qualified employees will not be able to enroll unless the employer group meets any applicable minimum participation rate implemented under § 155.705(b)(10).

(l) *Applicability date.* The provisions of this section apply for plan years beginning prior to January 1, 2018. Section 155.726 is applicable for plan years beginning on or after January 1, 2018.

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