COBRAcare+
FAQ

Individual Health Insurance vs. COBRA

How much will it cost?

Individual Health Insurance: Average monthly premium is often considerably lower than average COBRA monthly premium.
COBRA: Average monthly premium is higher than average individual health insurance premium (up to 5x more expensive).

Can I apply federal tax credits (subsidies)?

Individual Health Insurance: If you are eligible to receive federal tax credits, you can apply the subsidy toward your health insurance.
COBRA: Federal tax credits can only be applied toward an individual health insurance plan purchased through the public exchange.

How long do I have to enroll?

Individual Health Insurance: You have 60 days from your last day of coverage to enroll in an individual insurance policy.
COBRA: You have a 60-day period from the day you were given the COBRA notice or the date you lost coverage, whichever occurs last.

When will my policy take effect?

Individual Health Insurance: You must enroll prior to the 15th of the month for your insurance to take effect the first day of the following month. Individual health insurance is not retroactive.
COBRA: Your COBRA coverage is retroactive (back to the date that your employer- sponsored health insurance ended).

How long is it effective?

Individual Health Insurance: No set expiration date. You can keep it as long as the carrier offers the plan.
COBRA: COBRA starts on the date of the qualifying event and lasts for 18 or 36 months.

Will I get credit for my medical deductible and out-of-pocket maximum from my former employer-sponsored plan?

Individual Health Coverage: Your medical deductible and out-of-pocket maximum will not transfer from your previous insurance plan to an individual health insurance policy.
COBRA: If COBRA is elected, your medical deductible and out-of-pocket maximum will transfer from your employer's plan.

Will my doctors and hospitals remain the same?

Individual Health Coverage: Doctors and hospital networks can differ. Review your new insurance policy carefully if you want specific doctors or hospitals to remain in- network.
COBRA: Yes. However, if your employer- sponsored plan changes, your benefits will change.

What should I know about filling current prescriptions during this transition?

Individual Health Coverage: Prescription coverage varies between plans and carriers. Review your new plan carefully.
COBRA: Prescriptions can be filled. However, until your COBRA insurance has been fully reinstated, you may be required to pay at the time of the service, then file a claim for reimbursement.

Can I enroll in dental and vision insurance?

Individual Health Coverage: You can enroll in new individual dental and/or vision plan(s).
COBRA: You can retain your current dental or vision plan(s). To do so, you must elect them on your COBRA paperwork during your eligibility period.

What should I do to enroll?

Individual Health Coverage: Enroll at
COBRA: Complete and submit your COBRA paperwork during the eligibility period.