

RCW 48.46.180 Duty of employer to inform and make available to employees option of enrolling in health maintenance organization. (1)

The state government, or any political subdivision thereof, which offers its employees a health benefits plan shall make available to and inform its employees or members of the option to enroll in at least one health maintenance organization holding a valid certificate of authority which provides health care services in the geographic areas in which such employees or members reside.

(2) Each employer, public or private, having more than fifty employees in this state which offers its employees a health benefits plan, and each employee benefits fund in this state having more than fifty members which offers its members any form of health benefits shall make available to and inform its employees or members of the option to enroll in at least one health maintenance organization holding a valid certificate of authority which provides health care services in the geographic areas in which a substantial number of such employees or members reside: PROVIDED, That unless at least twenty-five employees agree to participate in a health maintenance organization the employer need not provide such an option: PROVIDED FURTHER, That where such employees are members of a bona fide bargaining unit covered by a labor-management collective bargaining agreement, the selection of the options required by this section may be specified in such agreement: AND PROVIDED FURTHER, That the provisions of this section shall not be mandatory where such members are covered by a Taft-Hartley health care trust, except that the labor-management trustees may contract with a health maintenance organization if a feasibility study determines it is to the advantage of the members to so contract.

(3) Subsections (1) and (2) of this section shall impose no responsibilities or duties upon state government or any political subdivision thereof or any other employer, either public or private, to provide health maintenance organization coverage when no health maintenance organization exists for the purpose of providing health care services in the geographic areas in which the employees or members reside.

(4) No employer in this state shall in any way be required to pay more for health benefits as a result of the application of this section than would otherwise be required by any prevailing collective bargaining agreement or other legally enforceable contract of obligation for the provision of health benefits between such employer and its employees. [1975 1st ex.s. c 290 s 19.]