



NEWS RELEASE

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Bill Extending Health Care Coverage for Eligible Unemployed Signed by Governor Ritter

Ft. Collins, Colorado – Governor Bill Ritter, Jr. signed HB 1349 last night to ensure health insurance continuation coverage for Coloradans who worked for small employers and were involuntarily terminated from employment between September 1, 2008 and February 17, 2009. These individuals may qualify for a federal subsidy that will pay 65 percent of Colorado state continuation or “mini-COBRA” premiums. The premium assistance applies to periods of continuation coverage beginning on or after February 17, 2009, and may last up to 9 months.

“This bill provides a ‘second chance’ for unemployed workers from small businesses to keep their insurance benefits,” said Insurance Commissioner Marcy Morrison. “The Colorado Division of Insurance and DORA encourage those with questions to please contact us. This bill is good for small business, good for consumers, and good for the entire state.”

In Colorado, employees who leave an employer can continue their health insurance through COBRA or state continuation. The former employee is required to pay the entire premium. COBRA applies to employers with 20 or more employees and state continuation typically applies to employers with fewer than 20 employees.

In February of this year President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The new law provides a subsidy that may reduce by 65 percent the cost of COBRA and Colorado’s “mini-COBRA” premium.

Any Coloradan who is not certain where to turn for health care insurance information during these turbulent economic times can contact the Colorado Division of Insurance for information at www.dora.state.co.us/insurance or call 303-894-7499 or toll free at 1-800-930-3745 (outside the Denver metro area.)

DORA is dedicated to preserving the integrity of the marketplace and is committed to promoting a fair and competitive business environment in Colorado.

Consumer protection is our mission.

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COBRA is the acronym for the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act.