

§ 110-136.14. Health insurer or health care plan administrator responsibilities.

(a) Upon receipt of the National Medical Support Notice from the employer, and within 40 business days after the date of the Notice, a health care plan administrator shall determine if the Notice is a "qualified medical child support order" (QMCSO), as defined under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) or the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act (CSPIA). If the Notice is not a qualified medical support order, the plan administrator shall inform the employer within the time set forth in this subsection.

(b) Upon receipt of the Notice in a nonqualified ERISA plan, or upon a finding that the Notice constitutes a qualified medical child support order, the health insurer or plan administrator shall enroll the dependent child or children in a health benefit plan, determine the cost of the coverage, and inform the employer of the amount of the employee contribution to be withheld from the obligor's wages, if appropriate. If the child or children are already enrolled in a health benefit plan, the employer shall be so notified. The employer shall also be notified of any applicable enrollment waiting periods.

(c) If there is more than one health benefit plan in which the dependent child or children may be enrolled, the insurer or plan administrator shall so inform the custodian within the time specified in this subsection. If no plan has been selected within 20 days from the date the insurer or administrator informed the agency of the option, the insurer or administrator may enroll the child or children in the insurer's or administrator's default option.

(d) If the obligor is subject to a waiting period for enrollment, the insurer or administrator shall inform the agency, the employer, the obligor, and the custodial parent. Upon the completion of the waiting period, the enrollment shall be instituted.

(e) When a court finds that a health insurer or health care plan administrator has failed to comply with this section, the employer is liable as a payor pursuant to G.S. 110-136.10(e). Additionally, a health insurer or health care plan administrator who violates this section is liable in a civil action for reasonable damages. (2001-237, s. 11.)