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Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2025 6:02 AM

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Cc: Nelsen, Steve (LEOFF) <steve.nelsen@leoff.wa.gov>

Subject: Question about Surviving Spouse Medical Insurance

External Email

LEOFF 2 Board Members,

My name is Renee Maher-Zieger and I am the surviving spouse of Federal Way Officer Patrick Maher (EOW 8/2/03). I am writing with the hopes that you can assist me in understanding some recent confusing developments in regard to the surviving spouse medical benefit.

When we worked on the legislation that provided this benefit to LEOFF 2 widows back in 2006, I distinctly remember telling spouses that they would be covered "for life." Recently, however, a surviving spouse shared with me that when she became eligible for Medicare, she was removed from her PEBB plan and forced on to a Medicare medical plan. I was extremely confused and concerned about this. Never in all of the discussions prior to the 2006 Legislative session nor during the actual session was there any discussion or agreement or suggestion that surviving spouses would be forced off of PEBB once they qualified for Medicare.

Additionally, she also now has Medicare premiums being deducted from her social security benefit. I know when we worked on the catastrophic disability medical legislation a few years later in 2010, there was specific discussion about Medicare being reimbursed to our catastrophically disabled members. So it now seems like some LEOFF members are having Medicare reimbursed while others are not.

I hope you can help me understand this issue. It is now causing a fair amount of concern with other surviving spouses and instead of misinformation getting passed around, I thought it best to go straight to the experts on the matter. And that's you!

Gratefully yours,

Renee Maher-Zieger