



Surviving Spouse Medical Reimbursements

Final Proposal
December 17, 2025

Issue

There are gaps and inconsistencies in medical insurance premium reimbursements for surviving spouses of line of duty death.

Plan Comparison

PEBB Eligibility for Surviving Spouses of LODD

- Surviving spouses of “emergency service personnel killed in the line of duty” are eligible for PEBB
 - "Emergency service personnel" means law enforcement officers and firefighters as defined in RCW 41.26.030, members of the Washington state patrol retirement fund as defined in RCW 43.43.120, and reserve officers and firefighters as defined in RCW 41.24.010.

Only LEOFF surviving spouses of LODD are eligible for reimbursement of PEBB premiums

Gaps/Inconsistencies

1. Once survivors of LODD are Medicare eligible they are no longer fully reimbursed for health care premiums.
2. Survivors of LODD only receive reimbursements for PEBB, while catastrophic disability retirees receive reimbursements for any premiums up to the amount of COBRA.
3. Survivors of LODD are not reimbursed for premium payments between the death of the member and LNI determining the death was in the line of duty.

LODD Data

- 98 survivors of LODD
- LNI provided data for LODD determinations since 2023
- 27 LODD determinations
- 506 average days between the member's death and a line of duty death determination
 - 3,123 highest number of days (102 months)
 - Only 1 determination took less than a month

Provision 1

Reimburse surviving spouses of LODD for Medicare premiums Parts A and B.

1. Pros

- Consistent with policy of reimbursing health insurance premiums for LODD survivors
- Consistent with catastrophic disability retirees

2. Cons

- Increase cost to the plan

Provision 2

Provide surviving spouses of LODD the option to opt out of PEBB and have the same medical insurance premium reimbursement options as Catastrophic Disability retirees.

1. Pros

- Allows surviving spouse to keep current insurance and providers
- Consistent with catastrophic disability retirees

2. Cons

- Increase cost to the plan
- Additional administrative steps for survivors to navigate

OSA Premium Assumptions

PEBB Premium Assumptions

Pre-Medicare Premium*	\$15,550
Medicare Eligible Premium*	\$5,750
Premium Growth Rate	4.50%

**Assumptions rounded to the nearest \$50 for display purposes.*

Employer Medical Premium Assumptions

Pre-Medicare Premium*	\$23,500
Medicare Eligible Premium*	\$5,350
Premium Growth Rate	4.50%
Employer Medical Plan Election	50%

**Assumptions rounded to the nearest \$50 for display purposes.*

Provision 3

Reimburse surviving spouses of LODD for medical insurance premiums paid during delay in a member's death being determined line of duty.

1. Pros

- Consistent with policy of reimbursing health insurance premiums for LODD survivors

2. Cons

- Increase cost to the plan

Actuarial Pricing

Survivor Medical Pricing Results				
<i>(Dollars in Millions)</i>	Provision 1	Provision 2	Provision 3	Total
Change in Present Value of Benefits	\$4.9	\$8.3	\$1.1	\$14.3
Unrounded Employee Rate Impact	0.007%	0.011%	0.002%	0.020%
Rounded Employee Rate Impact*	0.01%	0.01%	0.00%	0.02%

**We use the rounded Aggregate contribution rate impact when calculating a supplemental rate. Employers and the state pay 60 and 40 percent of this rate, respectively. The total contribution rate changes from this proposal would result in 0.02% charged to employees and 0.01% charged to employers and the state. If this proposal becomes a bill, our corresponding fiscal note will capture the current and next biennia fiscal impacts to GF-S / Local Employer budgets, along with an estimate of 25-year costs*

DRS Draft Fiscal Note

- DRS staff worked closely with Board staff and OSA on analysis of these issues
- DRS provided a draft fiscal note for implementing all 3 policy options
- New IT system costs

	2025-27 Biennium	
	FY 2026	FY 2027
FTE Staff Years		
A-Salaries and Wages	\$49,000	\$25,000
B-Employee Benefits	\$15,000	\$8,000
C-Personal Service Contracts	\$37,000	\$53,000
E-Goods and Services	\$0	\$0
G-Travel	\$0	\$0
J-Capital Outlays		
N-Grants, Benefits and CI Svcs		
P-Debt Service		
S-Interagency Reimbursement		
Total:	\$101,000	\$86,000
	\$187,000	

Next Steps

- 1. Motion to endorse legislation. Board may choose any combination of the 3 provisions below:**
 - 1. Reimburse surviving spouses of LODD for Medicare premiums;**
 - 2. Provide surviving spouses of LODD the option to opt out of PEBB and have the same medical insurance premium reimbursement options as Catastrophic Disability retirees; and, or**
 - 3. Reimburse surviving spouses of LODD for medical insurance premiums paid during delays in a member death being determined line of duty.**
- 2. No further action**



Thank You

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FINAL PROPOSAL

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ISSUE STATEMENT

There are gaps and inconsistencies in medical insurance premium reimbursements for surviving spouses of line of duty death (LODD).

OVERVIEW

The policy intent of the LEOFF 2 Board has been to provide medical insurance premium reimbursement for survivors of LODD. However, the following gaps or inconsistencies in current law have been identified:

1. Surviving spouses of line of duty death (LODD) are no longer fully reimbursed for medical insurance premiums once they are Medicare eligible;
2. Surviving spouses of LODD must enroll in PEBB to receive medical insurance premium reimbursements; and,
3. Delays in a member's death being determined LODD create a gap in medical insurance premium reimbursement for survivors.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY ISSUES

The determination of whether a LEOFF 2 member's death is in the line of duty is made by the Department of Labor and Industries (LNI), in accordance with RCW 51.32.040. In addition to other benefits, survivors of members who died in the line of duty are eligible for medical insurance coverage through the Public Employee Benefits Board (PEBB) at the Health Care Authority (HCA) and reimbursements "for any payments of premium rates to the Washington state health care authority [...]".¹

In general, for a single person the Medicare eligible PEBB plans cost between \$150 to \$180 and pre-Medicare PEBB plans cost between \$794 to \$953. The cost for Medicare Part B (Medical

¹ <https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2005-06/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/6723.SL.pdf?cite=2006%20c%20345%20s%201>

Insurance) is currently \$185 per month. Medicare Part B isn't reimbursed by LEOFF 2 and is paid from the survivor's Social Security payment.

In 2010, the LEOFF 2 Board endorsed legislation (SHB 1679²) to reimburse members who are catastrophically disabled in the line of duty for the premiums they pay for employer provided health insurance, or for any other health insurance up to the amount of COBRA, for themselves, their spouses and dependent children. This legislation, similar to PEBB, required members eligible for Medicare coverage to enroll in Medicare to continue to be eligible for reimbursement from LEOFF. However, catastrophic disability retirees are reimbursed for Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) and B (Medical Insurance) premiums.

When a catastrophic disability retiree dies their survivor is no longer eligible for these catastrophic disability medical insurance coverage and reimbursements. However, if the catastrophic disability retiree's death is determined to be a LODD, their survivor becomes eligible for line of duty death benefits, including eligibility for PEBB and reimbursements for PEBB coverage.

PEBB Premium Data

As of May 30, 2025 there were 90 surviving spouses receiving medical reimbursements for PEBB medical insurance coverage. Thirty of these surviving spouses were enrolled into Medicare. DRS provided a list of the current PEBB reimbursements for line of duty death survivors:

Amount	Survivors
\$ 114.80	2
\$ 171.19	1
\$ 177.41	3
\$ 181.55	4
\$ 419.36	20
\$ 893.00	1
\$ 898.12	18
\$ 922.97	2
\$ 953.54	1
\$ 1,088.67	2

² <https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1679-S.SL.pdf?q=20250530092722>

\$ 1,478.88	1
\$ 1,558.46	1
\$ 1,567.43	32
\$ 1,610.92	1
\$ 2,459.84	1

LODD Death Determination

The process for determining that a member's death was in the line of duty can take more than a month, resulting in a gap in medical insurance premium reimbursement for survivors. Below is data from LNI for the number of days between a member's death and the LNI determination that the death was duty related.

LNI Decision	Date of Death	L&I - Decision date	Number of days
Allow	06/24/2025	07/15/2025	21
Allow	01/29/2023	03/17/2023	47
Allow	05/30/2024	07/19/2024	50
Allow	09/05/2025	10/31/2025	56
Allow	07/24/2023	09/20/2023	58
Allow	09/03/2024	11/19/2024	77
Allow	07/21/2024	10/11/2024	82
Accept	08/09/2025	10/31/2025	83
Allow	07/18/2025	10/15/2025	89
Allow	03/19/2025	06/25/2025	98
Allow	11/21/2022	03/08/2023	107
Allow	03/26/2024	07/22/2024	118
Allow	12/14/2022	04/11/2023	118
Allow	04/13/2024	08/30/2024	139
Accept	02/22/2025	07/18/2025	146
Allow	01/28/2025	06/25/2025	148
Allow	12/23/2023	05/29/2024	158
Allow	01/12/2023	09/07/2023	238
Allow	09/19/2023	07/09/2024	294
Allow	12/08/2021	03/06/2023	453
Allow	08/04/2022	02/21/2024	566
Allow	11/21/2022	08/06/2024	624
Allow	05/20/2021	09/11/2023	844
Allow	01/14/2020	03/20/2024	1527
Allow	12/20/2018	04/10/2024	1938
Allow	12/17/2018	09/19/2025	2468
Allow	06/30/2015	01/17/2024	3123

LNI provided data for determinations since 2023. There was a total of 27 line of duty death determinations with an average of 506 days between the member’s death and a line of duty death determination

Actuarial Analysis

OSA provided a pricing (see Appendix D) for the bill draft provided by LEOFF 2 Board staff (see Appendix C). At the request of Board staff OSA separated out the three policy issues addressed in the bill draft into three separate pricing provisions so that the Board could identify the price of each.

- Provision 1 reimburses premiums for Medicare Parts A and B.
- Provision 2 provides a one-time election for survivors to opt out of PEBB health insurance and instead receive reimbursement for health insurance provided through the deceased member’s employer. Survivors who elect this option but are not offered employer health insurance may receive reimbursement for other health insurance premiums. These reimbursements would be capped at the employer COBRA premium amount.
- Provision 3 provides a refund of premiums paid from the date of the member’s death to the date of determination that the member died from duty-related causes. This provision applies to premiums paid after June 10, 2010 (the effective date of SHB 1679 (2010)).

Below is a chart, provided by OSA, with the pricing and contribution rate breakdown by each provision and total impact of all provisions:

Survivor Medical Pricing Results				
<i>(Dollars in Millions)</i>	Provision 1	Provision 2	Provision 3	Total
Change in Present Value of Benefits	\$4.9	\$8.3	\$1.1	\$14.3
Unrounded Employee Rate Impact	0.007%	0.011%	0.002%	0.020%
Rounded Employee Rate Impact*	0.01%	0.01%	0.00%	0.02%

**We use the rounded Aggregate contribution rate impact when calculating a supplemental rate. Employers and the state pay 60 and 40 percent of this rate, respectively. The total contribution rate changes from this proposal would result in 0.02% charged to employees and 0.01% charged to employers and the state. If this proposal becomes a bill, our corresponding fiscal note will capture the current and next biennia fiscal impacts to GF-S / Local Employer budgets, along with an estimate of 25-year costs*

Department of Retirement Systems Fiscal Impact

DRS provided a draft fiscal note for the bill draft provided by LEOFF 2 Board staff (see Appendix C). A significant portion of the cost is driven by changes that would need to be made to the existing IT system, as well as the new IT system currently being developed.

	2025-27 Biennium	
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FTE Staff Years		
A-Salaries and Wages	\$49,000	\$25,000
B-Employee Benefits	\$15,000	\$8,000
C-Personal Service Contracts	\$37,000	\$53,000
E-Goods and Services	\$0	\$0
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N-Grants, Benefits and CI Svcs		
P-Debt Service		
S-Interagency Reimbursement		
Total:	\$101,000	\$86,000
	\$187,000	

POLICY OPTIONS

Option 1: Endorse legislation. There are three separate provisions of option 1 which the Board may choose to adopt any combination of:

1. Reimburse surviving spouses of LODD for Medicare premiums;
2. Provide surviving spouses of LODD the option to opt out of PEBB and have same the medical insurance premium reimbursement options as Catastrophic Disability retirees; and, or
3. Reimburse surviving spouses of LODD for medical insurance premiums paid during delays in a member's death being determined line of duty.

Option 2: No action.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Appendix A: Letter from Renee Maher-Zieger

Appendix B: Letter from Nissa Annis Levings

Appendix C: Bill Draft

Appendix D: Office of the State Actuary Pricing Analysis