



## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 21-6453, **Version:** 1

---

**Department:** Human Resources and Risk Management

**Department Head/Elected Official:** Shain Carrizal

**Regular or Supplemental RCA:** Regular RCA

**Type of Request:** Policy

**Project ID** (if applicable): N/A

**Vendor/Entity Legal Name** (if applicable): N/A

**MWDBE Participation** (if applicable): N/A

**Request Summary (Agenda Caption):**

Request by Human Resources & Risk Management for approval to temporarily amend the Harris County Personnel Policies and Procedures to suspend the 75-day benefit waiting period for new employees until December 31, 2021. New regular position employees will be eligible for group health benefits the first day of the pay period following 7 days of continuous employment.

**Background and Discussion:**

Because of the elevated threat level, temporarily suspending the 75-day benefit waiting period supports the wellness of new Harris County employees and assists with stopping the spread of COVID by promoting new employees to get tested and seek treatment for COVID without the financial concern of having insurance to cover the expenses. Suspension of the benefit waiting period was last extended through November 30, 2021.

**Expected Impact:**

Harris County is self-insured for medical. An analysis was performed for the March 1, 2020 - February 28, 2021 plan year, and \$1.6M was paid by the plan for new employees and their dependents prior to their 75-day waiting period. This represented 0.5% of the total \$320M in claims. However, \$1.6M is overstating the financial impact because an employee or their dependent could have used the medical plan prior to 75 days, but it is possible they would have sought the same medical services after 75 days. Since implementation of this policy amendment, there has been \$140K in claims paid for employees (and their dependents), who terminated employment before the 75-day waiting period.

**Alternative Options:**

Commissioners Court could take no action to eliminate the financial impact.

**Alignment with Goal(s):**

- Justice and Safety
- Economic Opportunity
- Housing

- Public Health
- Transportation
- Flooding
- Environment
- Governance and Customer Service

**Prior Court Action** (if any):

| Date       | Agenda Item # | Action Taken   |
|------------|---------------|--|
| 4/28/2020  | 22.a.4        | Temporary Amendment to Harris County Policies and Procedures. Continuously Approved through June 30, 2021. |
| 6/8/2021   | 3             | Reinstated the 75-Day Benefit Waiting Period for New Employees   |
| 8/10/2021  | 2             | Temporary Amendment to Harris County Policies and Procedures Approved through September 30, 2021.          |
| 9/28/2021  | 15            | Temporary Amendment to Harris County Policies and Procedures Approved through October 31, 2021.            |
| 10/26/2021 | 10            | Temporary Amendment to Harris County Policies and Procedures Approved through November 30, 2021.           |

**Location:**

Address (if applicable): N/A

Precinct(s): Countywide

| <b>Fiscal and Personnel Summary</b>  |                       |              |                   |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Service Name   | Benefits and Wellness |              |                   |
|  | <b>FY 21-22</b>       | <b>FY 22</b> | <b>Next 3 FYs</b> |
| <b>Incremental Expenditures (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)</b> |                       |              |                   |
| Labor Expenditures   | \$                    | \$           | \$                |
| Non-Labor Expenditures   | \$140,000             | \$           | \$                |
| <b>Total Incremental Expenditures</b>  | <b>\$140,000</b>      | <b>\$</b>    | <b>\$</b>         |
| <b>Funding Sources (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)</b>          |                       |              |                   |
| Existing Budget  |                       |              |                   |
| Other  | \$140,000             | \$           | \$                |
| Choose an item.  | \$                    | \$           | \$                |
| Choose an item.  | \$                    | \$           | \$                |
| <b>Total Current Budget</b>  | <b>\$140,000</b>      | <b>\$</b>    | <b>\$</b>         |
| Additional Budget Requested  |                       |              |                   |
| Choose an item.  | \$                    | \$           | \$                |
| Choose an item.  | \$                    | \$           | \$                |
| Choose an item.  | \$                    | \$           | \$                |

|   |                  |    |    |
|---|------------------|----|----|
| Total Additional Budget Requested                               | \$               | \$ | \$ |
| <b>Total Funding Sources</b>                                    | <b>\$140,000</b> | \$ | \$ |
| <b>Personnel</b> (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs) |                  |    |    |
| Current Position Count for Service                              | -                | -  | -  |
| Additional Positions Requested                                  | -                | -  | -  |
| <b>Total Personnel</b>  | -                | -  | -  |

**Anticipated Implementation Date:** December 1, 2021

**Emergency/Disaster Recovery Note:** COVID-19 related item

**Contact(s) name, title, department:** Shain Carrizal, Sr. Director, Human Resources & Risk Management

**Attachments** (if applicable): N/A