

§411.103

42 CFR Ch. IV (10–1–07 Edition)

by virtue of current employment status.

§411.103 Prohibition against financial and other incentives.

(a) *General rule.* An employer or other entity (for example, an insurer) is prohibited from offering Medicare beneficiaries financial or other benefits as incentives not to enroll in, or to terminate enrollment in, a GHP that is, or would be, primary to Medicare. This prohibition precludes offering to Medicare beneficiaries an alternative to the employer primary plan (for example, coverage of prescription drugs) unless the beneficiary has primary coverage other than Medicare. An example would be primary coverage through his own or a spouse's employer.

(b) *Penalty for violation.* (1) Any entity that violates the prohibition of paragraph (a) of this section is subject to a civil money penalty of up to \$5,000 for each violation; and

(2) The provisions of section 1128A of the Act (other than subsections (a) and (b)) apply to the civil money penalty of up to \$5,000 in the same manner as the provisions apply to a penalty or proceeding under section 1128A(a).

§411.104 Current employment status.

(a) *General rule.* An individual has current employment status if—

(1) The individual is actively working as an employee, is the employer (including a self-employed person), or is associated with the employer in a business relationship; or

(2) The individual is not actively working and—

(i) Is receiving disability benefits from an employer for up to 6 months (the first 6 months of employer disability benefits are subject to FICA taxes); or

(ii) Retains employment rights in the industry and has not had his employment terminated by the employer, if the employer provides the coverage (or has not had his membership in the employee organization terminated, if the employee organization provides the coverage), is not receiving disability benefits from an employer for more than 6 months, is not receiving disability benefits from Social Security, and has GHP coverage that is not pur-

suant to COBRA continuation coverage (26 U.S.C. 4980B; 29 U.S.C. 1161–1168; 42 U.S.C. 300bb–1 *et seq.*). Whether or not the individual is receiving pay during the period of nonwork is not a factor.

(b) *Persons who retain employment rights.* For purposes of paragraph (a)(2) of this section, persons who retain employment rights include but are not limited to—

(1) Persons who are furloughed, temporarily laid off, or who are on sick leave;

(2) Teachers and seasonal workers who normally do not work throughout the year; and

(3) Persons who have health coverage that extends beyond or between active employment periods; for example, based on an hours bank arrangement. (Active union members often have hours bank coverage.)

(c) *Coverage by virtue of current employment status.* An individual has coverage by virtue of current employment status with an employer if—

(1) the individual has GHP or LGHP coverage based on employment, including coverage based on a certain number of hours worked for that employer or a certain level of commissions earned from work for that employer at any time; and

(2) the individual has current employment status with that employer, as defined in paragraph (a) of this section.

(d) *Special rule: Self-employed person.* A self-employed individual is considered to have GHP or LGHP coverage by virtue of current employment status during a particular tax year only if, during the preceding tax year, the individual's net earnings, from work in that year related to the employer that offers the group health coverage, are at least equal to the amount specified in section 211(b)(2) of the Act, which defines "self-employment income" for social security purposes.

(e) *Special Rule: members of religious orders and members of clergy—*(1) *Members of religious orders who have not taken a vow of poverty.* A member of a religious order who has *not* taken a vow of poverty is considered to have current employment status with the religious order if—

(i) The religious order pays FICA taxes on behalf of that member; or

(ii) The individual is receiving cash remuneration from the religious order.

(2) *Members of religious orders who have taken a vow of poverty.* A member of a religious order whose members are required to take a vow of poverty is not considered to be employed by the order if the services he or she performs as a member of the order are considered employment only because the order elects social security coverage under section 3121(r) of the IRC. This exemption applies retroactively to services performed as a member of the order, beginning with the effective dates of the MSP provisions for the aged and the disabled, respectively. The exemption does not apply to services performed for employers outside of the order.

(3) *Members of the clergy.* A member of the clergy is considered to have current employment status with a church or other religious organization if the individual is receiving cash remuneration from the church or other religious organization for services rendered.

(f) *Special rule: Delayed compensation subject to FICA taxes.* An individual who is not working is not considered an employee solely on the basis of receiving delayed compensation payments for previous periods of work even if those payments are subject to FICA taxes (or would be subject to FICA taxes if the employer were not exempt from paying those taxes). For example, an individual who is not working in 1993 and receives payments subject to FICA taxes for work performed in 1992 is not considered to be an employee in 1993 solely on the basis of receiving those payments.

§411.106 Aggregation rules.

The following rules apply in determining the number and size of employers, as required by the MSP provisions for the aged and disabled:

(a) All employers that are treated as a single employer under subsection (a) or (b) of section 52 of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 52 (a) and (b)) are treated as a single employer.

(b) All employees of the members of an affiliated service group (as defined

in section 414(m) of the IRC (26 U.S.C. 414m)) are treated as employed by a single employer.

(c) Leased employees (as defined in section 414(n)(2) of the IRC (26 U.S.C. 414(n)(2))) are treated as employees of the person for whom they perform services to the same extent as they are treated under section 414(n) of the IRC.

(d) In applying the IRC provisions identified in this section, CMS relies upon regulations and decisions of the Secretary of the Treasury respecting those provisions.

§411.108 Taking into account entitlement to Medicare.

(a) *Examples of actions that constitute "taking into account"*. Actions by GHPs or LGHPs that constitute taking into account that an individual is entitled to Medicare on the basis of ESRD, age, or disability (or eligible on the basis of ESRD) include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Failure to pay primary benefits as required by subparts F, G, and H of this part 411.

(2) Offering coverage that is secondary to Medicare to individuals entitled to Medicare.

(3) Terminating coverage because the individual has become entitled to Medicare, except as permitted under COBRA continuation coverage provisions (26 U.S.C. 4980B(f)(2)(B)(iv); 29 U.S.C. 1162.(2)(D); and 42 U.S.C. 300bb-2.(2)(D)).

(4) In the case of a LGHP, denying or terminating coverage because an individual is entitled to Medicare on the basis of disability without denying or terminating coverage for similarly situated individuals who are not entitled to Medicare on the basis of disability.

(5) Imposing limitations on benefits for a Medicare entitled individual that do not apply to others enrolled in the plan, such as providing less comprehensive health care coverage, excluding benefits, reducing benefits, charging higher deductibles or coinsurance, providing for lower annual or lifetime benefit limits, or more restrictive pre-existing illness limitations.

(6) Charging a Medicare entitled individual higher premiums.