

**Subpart H—Order of Precedence and Designation of Beneficiary**

**§ 870.801 Order of precedence and payment of benefits.**

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, benefits are paid according to the order of precedence stated in 5 U.S.C. 8705(a), as follows:

- (1) To the designated beneficiary (or beneficiaries);
- (2) If none, to the widow(er);
- (3) If none, to the child, or children in equal shares, with the share of any deceased child going to his/her children;
- (4) If none, to the parents in equal shares or the entire amount to the surviving parent;
- (5) If none, to the executor or administrator of the estate;
- (6) If none, to the next of kin according to the laws of the State in which the insured individual legally resided.

(b) If an insured individual provides in a valid designation of beneficiary for insurance benefits to be payable to the insured's estate, or to the Executor, Administrator, or other representative of the insured's estate, or if the benefits would otherwise be payable to the duly appointed representative of the insured's estate under the order of precedence specified in 5 U.S.C. 8705(a), payment of the benefits to the duly appointed representative of the insured's estate bars recovery by any other person.

(c) Option A and B insurance in force on a person on the date of his/her death is paid, on receipt of a valid claim, in the same order of precedence and under the same conditions as Basic insurance. A designation of beneficiary for Basic insurance is also a designation of beneficiary for Options A and B, unless the insured individual states otherwise in his/her designation.

(d)(1) If there is a court order in effect naming a specific person or persons to receive life insurance benefits upon the death of an insured individual, Basic insurance and Option A and Option B insurance will be paid to the person or persons named in the court order, instead of according to the order of precedence.

(2) To qualify a person for such payment, a certified copy of the court order must be received by the appro-

priate office on or after July 22, 1998, and before the death of the insured.

(3)(i) For employees, the appropriate office is their employing agency.

(ii) For annuitants, the appropriate office is OPM.

(iii) For compensationers during the first 12 months of nonpay status, the appropriate office is their employing agency.

(iv) For compensationers after separation or the completion of 12 months in nonpay status, the appropriate office is OPM.

(v) For employees and former employees who have ported Option B coverage, the appropriate office is the Portability Office.

(4) If, within the applicable time frames, the appropriate office receives conflicting court orders entitling different persons to the same insurance, benefits will be paid based on whichever court order was issued first.

(e) Upon the death of an insured family member, Option C benefits are paid to the employee, annuitant, or compensationer responsible for withholdings under §870.402(a), except as provided in paragraph (f) of this section.

(f) If an employee, annuitant, or compensationer entitled to receive Option C benefits dies before the benefits are paid, the Option C benefits are paid to the individual(s) entitled to receive Basic life insurance benefits under the statutory order of precedence. However, if the insurance has been assigned in accordance with subpart I of this part, any prior designations of beneficiary were cancelled; benefits in this instance are paid under the statutory order of precedence, starting with the second on the list.

[62 FR 48731, Sept. 17, 1997, as amended at 64 FR 16602, Apr. 6, 1999; 64 FR 72464, Dec. 28, 1999; 68 FR 59082, Oct. 14, 2003]

**§ 870.802 Designation of beneficiary.**

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (i) of this section, if an insured individual wants benefits paid differently from the order of precedence, he/she must file a designation of beneficiary. A designation of beneficiary cannot be filed by anyone other than the insured individual. Exception: if the insurance has been assigned under subpart I of

this part, the insured individual cannot designate a beneficiary; only the assignee(s) can designate beneficiaries.

(b) A designation of beneficiary must be in writing, signed by the insured individual, and witnessed and signed by 2 people. The appropriate office must receive the designation before the death of the insured.

(1) For employees, the appropriate office is the employing office.

(2) For annuitants and compensationers, the appropriate office is OPM.

(3) For employees and former employees who have ported Option B coverage, the appropriate office is the Portability Office.

(c) A designation, change, or cancellation of beneficiary in a will or any other document not witnessed and filed as required by this section has no legal effect with respect to benefits under this chapter.

(d) A witness to a designation of beneficiary cannot be named as a beneficiary.

(e) Any individual, firm, corporation, or legal entity can be named as a beneficiary, except an agency of the Federal or District of Columbia Government.

(f) An insured individual (or an assignee) may change his/her beneficiary at any time without the knowledge or consent of the previous beneficiary. This right cannot be waived or restricted.

(g)(1) A designation of beneficiary is automatically cancelled 31 days after the individual stops being insured. Exception: If the individual elects portability for Option B, a valid designation remains in effect.

(2) An assignment under subpart I of this part automatically cancels an insured individual's designation of beneficiary.

(h) An insured individual may provide that a designated beneficiary is entitled to the insurance benefits only if the beneficiary survives him/her for a specified period of time (not more than 30 days). If the beneficiary doesn't survive for the specified period, insurance benefits will be paid as if the beneficiary had died before the insured.

(i)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (i)(2) of this section, if a court order

has been received in accordance with §870.801(d), an insured individual cannot designate a different beneficiary, unless

(i) The person(s) named in the court order gives written consent for the change, or

(ii) The court order is modified.

(2) If a court order has been received in accordance with §870.801(d), and the court order applies to only part of the insurance benefits, an insured individual can designate a different beneficiary to receive the insurance benefits that are not included under the court order. If the insured individual does not make a designation for these benefits and there is no previous valid designation on file, benefits will be paid according to the order of precedence shown in §870.801(a).

(3) If a court order received in accordance with §870.801(d) is subsequently modified without naming a new person to receive the benefits, and a certified copy of the modified court order is received by the appropriate office before the death of the insured, the insured individual can designate a beneficiary. Benefits will be paid according to the order of precedence shown in §870.801(d) if the insured individual does not complete a new designation of beneficiary.

[62 FR 48731, Sept. 17, 1997; 62 FR 52181, Oct. 6, 1997, as amended at 64 FR 16602, Apr. 6, 1999; 64 FR 72464, Dec. 28, 1999]

#### **§ 870.803 Child incapable of self-support.**

(a) When it receives a claim for Option C benefits because of the death of a child age 22 or older, OFEGLI determines, based on whatever evidence it considers necessary, whether the deceased child was incapable of self-support because of a mental or physical disability which existed before the child reached age 22.

(b) If an employee elects Option C under §870.506(a) (3), and the opportunity to elect is based solely on the acquisition of a child age 22 or older, the employee must submit to the employing office, at the time of making the election, a doctor's certificate stating that the child is incapable of self-support because of a physical or mental disability which existed before the