

# Memo

To: All Diocesan Units  
From: Nancy Signore  
Date: 4/19/2006  
Re: Employee Benefits

---

There are several parishes or institutions throughout the Diocese that are not currently providing health benefits to their employees through the Episcopal Church Medical Trust. Below is some information I have just obtained regarding legal obligations of employers that do not offer a “church plan”.

Medical plans offered through the Medical Trust are considered self-funded “church plans” and, as such, are not always required to comply with the same federal or state laws as “group plans” sold through a local insurance carrier. For example, if you have purchased a group plan through a local carrier, and if an employee becomes separated or divorced, the group plan will require you by law to insure the divorced spouse for up to 36 months.

This coverage through the group plan may be at the divorced spouses’ expense, however, the local carrier may require the charges to be billed to the employer (parish), therefore making you responsible for collection and payment of premiums on this policy. This even holds true if the employee is terminated during this 36-month period. Also, if an employee is terminated you are required by law to offer them an 18-month extension of benefits or COBRA, again leaving you responsible for billing and collection of premiums for this time period.

As the Diocese of Long Island’s Plan Administrator I feel obligated to bring this to your attention and urge you to consider this fact when making benefit decisions each year.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Nancy Signore

Office Manager and Plan Administrator  
Diocese of Long Island  
36 Cathedral Avenue  
Garden City, NY 11530  
516/248-4800 x11  
nancy@dioceseli.org