



Benefits in Turbulent Times– PART 1

Is the End of the Pandemic Really Here?



Today's Speakers



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Welcome

Goals for this Session

1. What does the end of the pandemic mean?
2. What do employers and employees need to know?
3. What you should consider in a post-pandemic state?

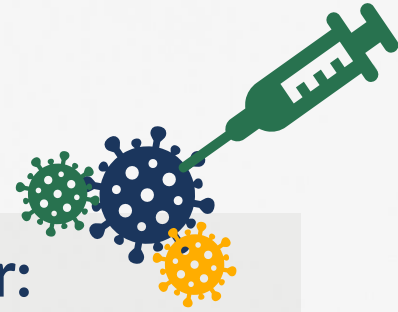


INTERACTION OPPORTUNITY:

POLL – Pick your theme song: How are you feeling about the End of the Pandemic?

What does the end of the
pandemic mean?

Certain Coverage Requirements are Ending



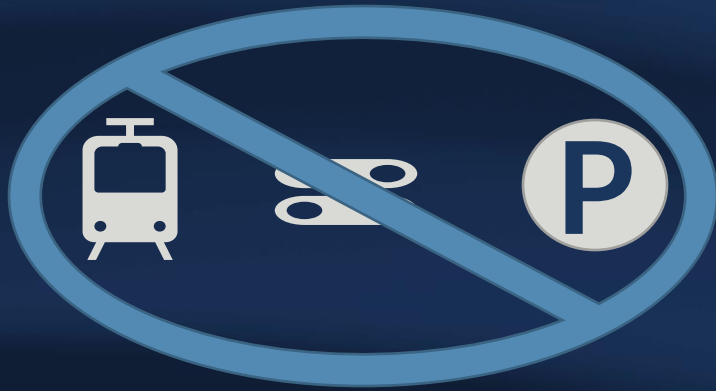
During the pandemic, there were mandatory benefit requirements for:

- **COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing** (both over-the-counter and prescribed)
- **COVID-19 Vaccines**

As of May 11, 2023 or as determined:

- **COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing**
 - Plans are encouraged (but not required) to cover COVID-19 tests
 - Plans must cover 'episodes' which began before May 11, even if they continue after May 11
 - Plans are encouraged (but not required) to post cash price for COVID-tests
 - State Medicaid programs and government contracts may be required to cover until Sept. 30, 2024
- **COVID-19 Vaccines**
 - Coverage for in-network COVID-19 vaccines must continue to be covered without cost-sharing as part of preventive care requirement.
 - Out-of-network vaccine costs may require cost sharing.

Ability to move commuter funds is ending



Effective July 11, 2023, participants will no longer be permitted to move funds between transit and parking plans.

New elections should be made for the type of benefit an employee intends to use.

Participants can continue to use any remaining funds based on the account the funds are in as of July 11.

Surprisingly Eligible Expenses

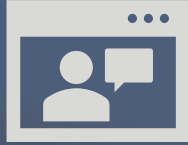
Mass Transit

- Extended Train Commutes (i.e. Amtrak)
- Single-ride Fares
Simply add Beniversal card to preferred digital wallet to tap-and-ride on-demand
- Vanpools
- Ferries

Parking

- Self-serve parking
- Parking at train station
- Parking meters / reserved spots
- Parking apps (i.e. Spot hero)

Certain Coverage Requirements are Sticking ...for now



Optional Coverage of Telehealth Services without Cost Sharing

- Plans have the option of covering telehealth services without cost-sharing through 12/31/24 without affecting eligibility to contribute to an HSA.
- Regardless of coverage, telehealth services are reimbursable under FSA, HSA and HRA (if applicable).



Items that remain in effect

- PPE remains qualified medical expense as it is not directly tied the outbreak period
- OTC and menstrual care products remain eligible for reimbursement under FSA, HSA and HRA (if applicable).

Certain Extensions are Sunsetting



During the pandemic and subsequent 'outbreak period', extensions were provided for:

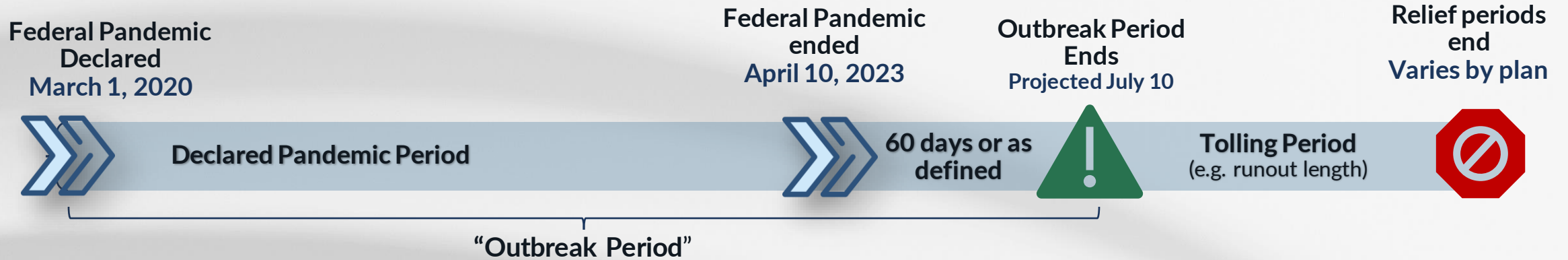
- Time a participant had to elect coverage
- Time a participant had to pay for COBRA
- Dispute denials of claims
- Amount of time to submit claims for coverage

Extensions were the lessor of:

- 12 months OR
- 60 days (or such period defined by agencies) following the end of pandemic

Over coming months, the outbreak period will end and we will be returning to normal timelines and processing procedures.

How is the end determined?



GENERAL RULE

The "Outbreak Period" ends 60 days after the National Emergency is ended (or such other date announced by agencies). Tolling periods resume at the end of the "Outbreak Period."

HAS THE END ARRIVED? MAYBE...

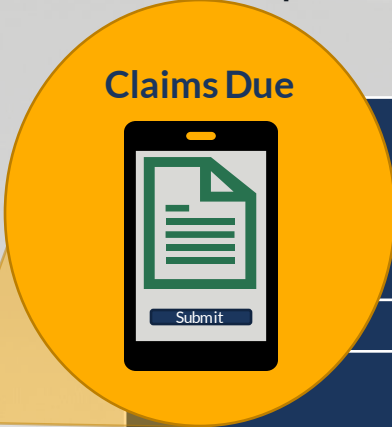

- March 29, agency FAQs Part 58 represented May 11 as end of National Emergency with July 10 as the end of the Outbreak Period.
- April 10, 2023: H.J. Res. 7 signed terminating the National Emergency and could trigger a 60 day end to the outbreak period.

NOTE: The dates and timelines provided are for reference and could change if additional guidance is provided from agencies.

FSA Deadline Examples

Participants with a runout period that expired on or after March 1, 2020, **received an extended period to submit claim reimbursements for eligible expenses** from their Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA).

Taking into consideration the projected end of the Outbreak period as July 10, 2023, see the last date to submit claims examples below:



Claims Due	Date of Existing Runout	Last date to submit claims (or dispute a previously denied claim)
	May 31, 2022	May 31, 2023
	July 31, 2022	July 31, 2023
	August 31, 2022 – June 30, 2023	July 10, 2023 + run out period 30-day run out: August 10, 2023 60-day run out: September 9, 2023 90-day run out: October 9, 2023 120-day run out: November 8, 2023

NOTE: The dates and timelines provided are for reference and could change if additional guidance is provided from agencies.

COBRA Deadline Examples

The guidance disregarded election, payment and submission requirement timeframes for the Outbreak Period. The “Outbreak Period” acts as a pause on typical deadlines that would apply for COBRA and other benefit plans, including the time a participant must elect COBRA and the time a participant has to pay for COBRA coverage.

Scenario	Rules Applied	Coverage Starts	Elected By	Paid By
FULL EXTENSION: Event dates through 3/31/23	Election: 12-month extension + 60-day election period Payment: 45 days from election	1/1/22	3/1/23	4/15/23
		2/1/22	4/1/23	5/15/23
LIMITED EXTENSION: Event dates 4/1/23 – 7/10/23	Election: 60 days from end of Outbreak Period (July 10, 2023) Payment: 45 days from election	4/1/23	9/8/23	10/23/23
		5/1/23	9/8/23	10/23/23
NORMAL PROCESSING: Event dates 7/11/23 and later	Election: 60 days from the date of the COBRA notice or the first day of COBRA eligibility (whichever is later) Payment: 45 days from election	7/12/23	9/8/23	10/23/23
		8/1/23	9/30/23	11/14/23

Five Things Employers Should Consider



INTERACTION OPPORTUNITY:

In the QUESTIONS panel: What do you anticipate hearing from participants regarding the end of pandemic?

#1

Understand your specific timelines.



FSA and claims deadlines are a factor of your plan year and length of runout



COBRA deadlines are based on individual event/coverage dates

#2

Determine appropriate timing for changes



If you are changing covered health services under your insurance plan in the middle of the plan year, you will need to consider:

- Communication to employees
- Continuing coverage for services which are in-progress at the time of change

#3

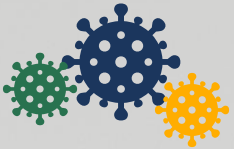
Don't panic. Be patient.

It took three years to declare the end of the pandemic. It will take some time to unwind the provisions.

- ✓ Dates are subject to change / clarification
- ✓ Utilization of the COBRA extensions has been minimal. Ending these extensions is expected to have little to no impact on COBRA enrollments.
- ✓ BRI is prepared for increased claims volume should it occur
(For 12 months ending Feb 2023, 95% of claims processed within 5 days, 75% within 3 days)
- ✓ Plan Highlights for 2023 already reflect current rules (no change required)
- ✓ Plan reconciliations will take longer

#4

Decide what Participant Communication is Needed



Health Insurance Plan Coverage Changes – Required for mid-year changes; Optional for new plan year



Claims deadlines – Recommended. BRI to post general notice through BRIWEB and email



COBRA Extensions – Passive communication. BRI to post notice in portal and remove extension language in new notices

#5

The Path-forward will be easier

For three years, employers, participants and administrators have been challenged by unclear and unsteady expectations.

- **Multiple plan years lead to questions and confusion.** At times, even a 'balance inquiry' can be complicated.
- **Increased complexities** can trigger an increase in manual research requests.
- **'Temporary rules' are not able to be optimized** and often involve more manual or time consuming processing.

Considerations for a post-pandemic state

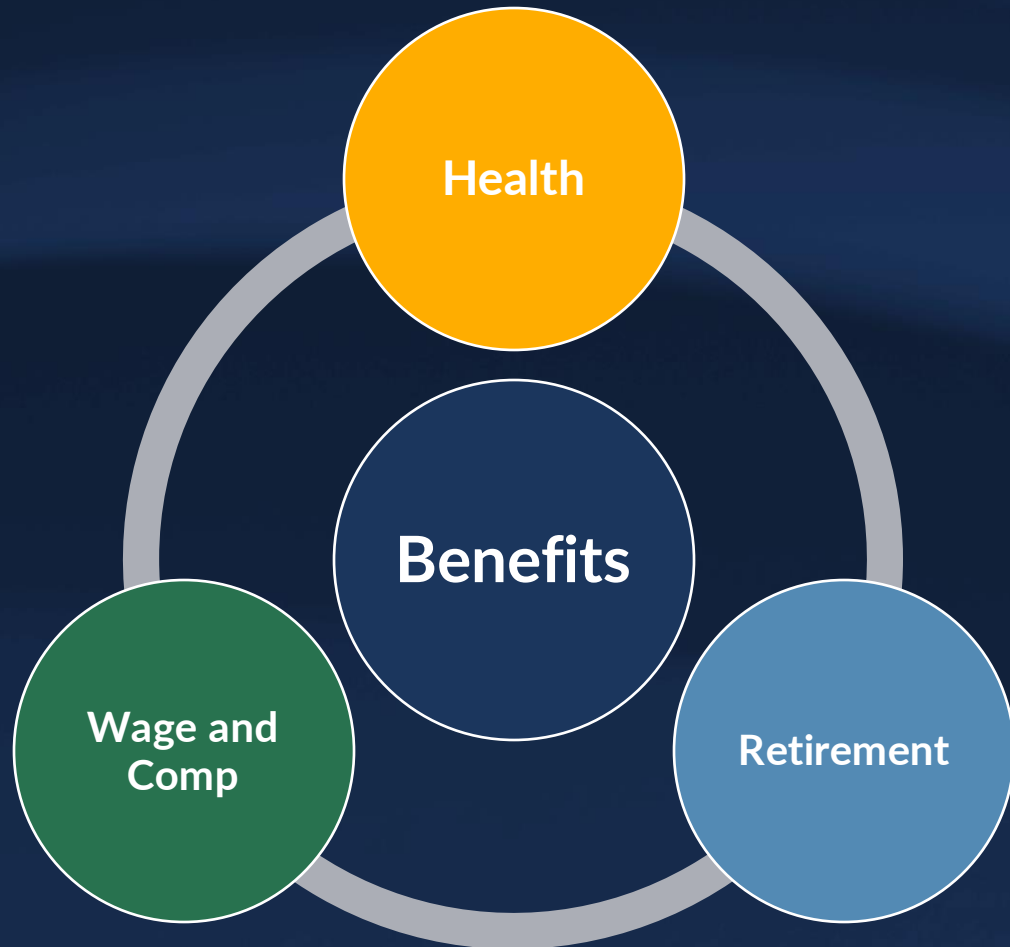


INTERACTION OPPORTUNITY:

In the **QUESTIONS** panel: What trend or change are you watching for the future of benefits?

The Definition of 'Benefits'

TRADITIONAL VIEW OF BENEFITS



EVOLVING DEFINITION OF BENEFITS



Rise in Lifestyle / Specialty Accounts

Specialty Accounts (also called Lifestyle Spending Accounts) are specifically designed to address the unique needs of employees through flexible employer design and funding of taxable benefits.

Why should you consider Specialty Accounts?

- **Flexibility.** Aligns benefits with the specific needs of employees
- **Retention.** Provides benefits that stand-out and aids in employee retention and acquisition strategies
- **Simple management** for streamlined implementation and management. Works with other benefits you are already offering

>1 in 2
focus on wellness
(physical and/or emotional)

Range in value = \$100 - \$10,000
Average = \$970
Median = \$300



**Over 300% increase in use
of Specialty Accounts**

Based on industry estimates from
2021 to 2022.

In May 2022, “just under 10%
of employers that responded
said they have a benefit— but
70% of respondents said that
they are considering adding

- Mercer Insights survey.

Commuting spend is on the rise **but also evolving**

Mass transit utilization has moved to more flexible / on-demand purchases

Mass Transit Spend for BRI Participants is Rising YOY


- **61% YOY Growth by Spend** (comparing 2021 v. 2022)
- **126% YOY Growth by Transactions** (comparing 2021 v. 2022)
- **Average spend in 2022 = \$18.41**

Contactless Utilization on Rapid Rise

- **259% YOY Growth by Spend** (comparing 2021 v. 2022)
- **259% YOY Growth by Transactions** (comparing 2021 v. 2022)
- **Average spend in 2022 = \$2.91**
- **12% of transit transactions made with contactless payment**

Employers are offering subsidies to encourage in-office work

**Employees save time on commute! Tap and Ride.
No pass purchase required. Simply, use it with OMNY
and other contactless transit systems**

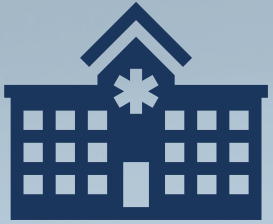
All Beniversal and eTRAC cards can be added to:   



Specialty Accounts for non-qualified commuting expenses
(i.e. car-pooling, tools, bikeshare)

Source: Mastercard Benchmark Analysis for BRI Transit Spend

Shift in How Care is Accessed



Demand at urgent care sites surged during the Covid-19 pandemic as people searched for tests and treatments. Patient volume has jumped 60% since 2019, according to the Urgent Care Association, an industry trade group. Emergency room visits are around ten times more expensive than visits to an urgent care center.

- CNN Business, Why Urgent care centers are popping up everywhere, 1/28/23

37% of adults used telemedicine in the past 12 months. Increases to 42% for women and 43% for 65 and older. The demonstrated benefits of telemedicine include improved access to care, convenience, and slowing spread of infection.

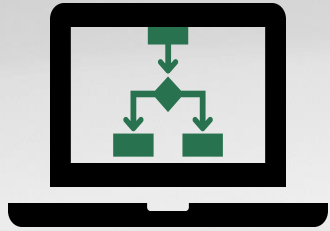
- Reported by CDC.gov based on 2021 data



Mental health care was the third most common reason women cited for accessing telehealth/telemedicine services, with 17% saying it was the primary purpose of their most recent telemedicine visit. The majority report that the quality of their telehealth visit was the same as an in-person visit.

- Reported by Kaiser Family Foundation Dec. 20, 2022

Technology-driven Benefits



Digital support for decision-making

In 2022, 70% of employers expanded tools to help employees make smart enrollment decisions; and 84% plan to in 2023.

- Source: <https://www.wtwco.com/>, 4/27/23

Virtual benefits enrollments are here to stay.

2 in 5 employees are expected to work remotely in future.

- Source: <https://www.wtwco.com/>, 4/27/23



Increased reliance on direct payment

87% of transactions made with card or digital payments

2.5X YOY growth of digital payments

- Source: BRI utilization data, 04/23



BONUS: Trends from our audience



Quick Recap



1. What does the end of the pandemic mean?

- Deadlines for claims submission, COBRA enrollments and payment due dates will be returning to pre-pandemic rules.
- Changes to eligible expenses are sticking around (at least for a while)

2. What do employers and employees need to know?

- Understand the timelines affecting your plans and how to handle changes and communications.

3. What you should consider in a post-pandemic state?

- We are forever changed from the types of benefits we want to how we select and access them.



Request a quote or schedule a plan review

FSA | HRA | HRA VEBA | HSA | COMMUTER BENEFITS | SPECIALTY/LIFESTYLE ACCOUNTS | COBRA | DIRECT BILLING

- 1) Reach out to your **assigned BRI representative**.
- 2) Complete the **post-event survey** and request a reach out.
- 3) Send an email to **info@BenefitResource.com**.

Join Us

Benefits in Turbulent Times

Part 1: Impact of End of Pandemic

Tuesday, May 9 at 1:00 ET

Part 2: Economic and Labor Market Pressures

Tuesday, May 23 at 1:00 ET

Part 3: How AI and Technology are Disrupting Benefits

Thursday, June 1 at 1:00 ET

Register at: <https://www.gotostage.com/channel/bri-outlook>



Thank You!

ANY QUESTIONS?