



To: Commissioners, First 5 Ventura County

From: Lauren Arzu, Director of Human Resources & Operations (on behalf of the Administration and Finance Committee)

Date: September 23, 2021

Re: Recommendation to Grant Exception to Employment Length Requirement Related to Health Insurance

Background

In May and June of 2021, Neighborhoods for Learning staff transferred from Interface Children & Family Services (ICFS) to become direct employees of First 5 Ventura County (F5VC).

F5VC considers these employees to have transferred; they were not required to go through a competitive interview process. The Commission waived some traditional requirements for these transfer employees, such as allowing access to Covid Sick Leave before the 30-day waiting period and allowing employees to transfer existing sick leave from ICFS to F5VC.

Some of these transfer employees need to utilize unpaid leave for medical purposes. They do not qualify for FMLA or CFRA because they have not completed at least 1,250 hours during the past twelve months as F5VC employees. The Employee Handbook currently states:

“Other than leaves governed by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and/or California Family Rights Act (CFRA), First 5 Ventura County is not obligated to pay any benefits or compensation to someone on an unpaid leave of absence. First 5 Ventura County, however, values its employees and is concerned about an employee's possible loss of medical insurance. Therefore, when an employee exhausts paid leave and goes on unpaid leave for medical purposes, including maternity leave, First 5 Ventura County will continue to pay up to three (3) months of health care premiums for employees who have passed the introductory period on a non-FMLA/CFRA medical leave. Following this period, an employee may make personal payments to continue coverage.”

The transfer employees had not passed the introductory period at the beginning of their unpaid leave. To support these valued employees while on an unpaid medical leave, staff recommends that the Commission cover their health insurance premiums. The Administration and Finance Committee reviewed and approved this recommendation.

Recommendation

The recommended action would grant an exception to the employment length requirement under policy for providing health insurance when on leave without pay for NfL staff who transferred to F5VC employment in May or June 2021.