

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR No. 7 of 2017

FROM : Chief Personnel Officer

TO : Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Departments, Chief Administrator,
Tobago House of Assembly and Heads of Statutory Authorities subject
to the Statutory Authorities Act, Chapter 24:01

DATE : December 14th, 2017

SUBJECT : *Variation of the arrangements relating to the UNIMED Group Health
Plans (Daily-rated and Monthly paid)*

I refer to Personnel Department Circular Memorandum dated October 3, 2017 on the subject "*Administrative arrangements relating to the UNIMED Group Health Plan for Daily-Rated employees of Government*", wherein you were reminded of the critical importance of the timely enrollment of workers on the Plan, prompt remittance of deductions to the Plan Administrator and proper record-keeping in order to ensure that eligible workers enjoy continuous coverage and to enable prompt claims processing and payment.

2. It has come to my attention that while Ministries/Departments are enrolling workers upon qualification and making the required deductions, in many cases, staff charged with the responsibility for administration of the Plan have failed to enroll workers as members of the Plan and deduct contributions, on time. This has resulted in the accumulation of arrears, quite substantial in some instances, and the non-coverage of the worker during the period to which the claim related.

3. I am informed also that cases of a similar nature are being experienced under the UNIMED Plan (monthly paid) as well.

4. As you are aware, existing arrangements provide for **compulsory** payment of the Employer's contribution and fortnightly or monthly deductions from the wages or salary of the worker or officer, as appropriate, **from the date of qualification** for membership in the Plans (daily-rated or monthly-paid). Therefore, you would appreciate that in cases where the required deductions were not made for lengthy periods, through no fault of the worker or officer, it will be a severe hardship on him/her for the outstanding deductions to be made from the date of qualification.

5. Consequently, to treat with cases where Ministries/Departments fail to enroll eligible persons upon qualification for membership in the UNIMED Plans (daily-rated and monthly paid), it has been decided that:-

- (i) the requirement for the mandatory deductions from a worker's wages or an officer's salary effective from the date of qualification for enrollment in the Plans (daily-rated or monthly paid), be waived in cases where, through administrative error, such deductions were not made and resulted in the accumulation of arrears; *and instead*
- (ii) deduction of the arrears of contribution from the worker's wages or officer's salary be made in respect of a **maximum period of six (6) months** and not from the date he/she qualified for enrollment in the Plan; and
- (iii) payment of the Employer's portion of the total fortnightly or monthly contribution be effected in respect of the same **maximum period of six (6) months**.

6. I must emphasize that the decisions at paragraph 5 above, are intended solely to address cases which may have resulted from administrative oversight. Accordingly, you are required to take immediate steps to ensure that appropriate action is taken. It is envisaged that as the recommended measures enunciated in my Circular Memorandum referenced in paragraph 1 above are implemented by Ministries and Departments, the incidence of such cases would decrease and eventually cease.

7. Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Departments, Heads of Statutory Authorities, the Chief Administrator, Tobago House of Assembly and Chief Executive Officers of the Regional Corporations are asked to ensure that the contents of this Circular Memorandum are brought to the attention of all employees, particularly those officers assigned responsibility for the administration of the UNIMED Plans (daily-rated and monthly paid).


BERESFORD RILEY
CHIEF PERSONNEL OFFICER