

Date of Hearing: May 5, 2020

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND RETIREMENT

Freddie Rodriguez, Chair

AB 2967 (O'Donnell) – As Amended May 4, 2020

SUBJECT: Public Employees' Medical and Hospital Care Act: firefighters and public safety officers.

SUMMARY: Makes changes relating to health benefits for survivors of firefighters or peace officers, as provided, who die as a result of an injury or disease arising out of, and the course of, the performance of duties. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) *Changes from within 10 business days to within 7 calendar days* in which the employer of a deceased firefighter or peace officer, as specified, must notify the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) of the death of the employee and any updated contact information of the surviving spouse or family member, if the spouse or family member may be eligible for healthcare enrollment.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Public Employee' Medical and Hospital Care Act (PEMHCA) to promote increased economy and efficiency in state service, enable the state to attract and retain qualified employees by providing health benefit plans similar to those commonly provided in private industry, and to recognize and protect the state's investment in each permanent employee by promoting and preserving good health among state employees.
- 2) Establishes as an annuitant, the spouse or other eligible family member of specified firefighters and peace officers whose death or disease occurred as a result of the performance of his or her official duties. In addition, the surviving spouse or other family member of the deceased firefighter or peace officer, if uninsured, is eligible for health benefits enrollment in a health benefit plan of the surviving spouse's choice, and establishes certain limitations on a child of the surviving spouse.
- 3) Requires an employer of the employer of a deceased firefighter or peace officers, as specified, to notify CalPERS within 10 business days of the death of the employee and any updated contact information of the surviving spouse or family member if that spouse or family member may be eligible for enrollment in a health benefit plan, as provided.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This bill is flagged as fiscal by Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS: According to the author, "The passing of a firefighter in the line of duty is a difficult time for surviving family members. While struggling with their grief, they must begin rebuilding their lives without a key member of their household. During this chaotic and confusing time, survivors are often faced with questions about whether and how their health insurance will continue. Employers are required to notify CalPERS when a firefighter passes

away in the line of duty so that CalPERS can offer surviving family members a health insurance plan with state-paid premiums. However, current law allows employers to take up to two business weeks to inform CalPERS, which can result in a significant delay in enrollment.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Professional Firefighters (*Sponsor*)

Opposition

None on file

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