

**Sixty-seventh Legislative Assembly of North Dakota  
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 5, 2021**

HOUSE BILL NO. 1435  
(Representatives Ista, Adams, Guggisberg, Heinert, Lefor, Mock, O'Brien, M. Ruby, Vetter)  
(Senators Bakke, Kreun, Meyer)

AN ACT to create and enact a new section to chapter 54-52.1 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to public employees retirement system health insurance benefits coverage for emergency responders who die in the line of duty; and to provide for retroactive application.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

**SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 54-52.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

**Emergency responders who die in the line of duty - Health benefits.**

1. As used in this section:
  - a. "Correctional facility staff" has the same meaning as provided under section 12-44.1-01.
  - b. "Dies in the line of duty" means a death occurring as a direct and proximate result of a personal injury sustained by an emergency responder while engaged in a line of duty activity or which arose out of and as a result of the individual's performance of a line of duty activity.
  - c. "Emergency responder" means a peace officer, member of a correctional facility staff, emergency medical services personnel, or firefighter, who is employed by the state, a political subdivision of the state, or an institution under the control of the state board of higher education. The term does not include a national guard security officer or national guard firefighter.
  - d. "Line of duty activity" means an employment-related action taken by an emergency responder which is required or authorized by law, rule, regulation, or condition of employment and for which compensation is provided by the employing entity or would have been eligible to have been provided by the employing entity if the emergency responder had been on duty at the time the action in question was taken.
  - e. "Peace officer" has the same meaning as provided under section 12-63-01. The term includes a game warden.
2. At no charge, the board shall offer health insurance benefits coverage, including drug benefits coverage, to the surviving spouse and dependent child of an emergency responder who dies in the line of duty. The provision of health insurance benefits coverage under this section includes coverage of a child of the emergency responder who is born within ten months of the date of the death.
3. The provision of health insurance benefits coverage under this section must continue for the:
  - a. Surviving spouse until the surviving spouse reaches age sixty-five; and
  - b. Dependent child until the dependent child reaches age twenty-six.
4. An employer shall notify the board of the qualifying event of an emergency responder dying in the line of duty.
5. This section does not affect eligibility for benefits under title 65.

**SECTION 2. RETROACTIVE APPLICATION.** This Act applies retroactively to the qualifying event of an emergency responder dying in the line of duty on or after January 1, 2010; however, the benefits under this Act do not begin before August 1, 2021.

*Kevin A. Heggen*  
Speaker of the House

*[Signature]*  
President of the Senate

*Buell J. Reich*  
Chief Clerk of the House

*[Signature]*  
Secretary of the Senate

This certifies that the within bill originated in the House of Representatives of the Sixty-seventh Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as House Bill No. 1435.

House Vote:      Yeas 75                  Nays 18                  Absent 1

Senate Vote:      Yeas 43                  Nays 4                  Absent 0

*Buell J. Reich*  
Chief Clerk of the House

Received by the Governor at 10:02 AM on April 14, 2021.

Approved at 11:24A M. on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

*[Signature]*  
Governor

Filed in this office this ~~14<sup>th</sup>~~ <sup>19<sup>th</sup></sup> day of April, 2021,

at 11:25 o'clock A M.

*[Signature]*  
Secretary of State