



Lynn Fitch
ATTORNEY GENERAL

OPINIONS DIVISION

January 31, 2020

Elise B. Munn, Esquire
Attorney, Copiah County Board of Supervisors
Post Office Drawer 768
Hazlehurst, Mississippi 39083

Re: Group Insurance Coverage for County Employee and Dependents

Dear Ms. Munn:

Attorney General Lynn Fitch is in receipt of your opinion request and has assigned it to me for research and response. In your letter, you explain that Copiah County is currently providing group health insurance for its eligible full-time employees. You inquire whether it is necessary to offer dependent coverage to all employees pursuant to Section 25-15-103(4)(b) of the Mississippi Code Annotated or whether the county can provide dependent coverage to a specified group of employees.

In response, Section 25-15-103 was amended in the 2019 Legislative Session and now provides the below additional language:

(4)(b) A county may provide group life insurance coverage **for all or specified groups of its public employees** and group hospitalization benefits for such public employees and their dependents, and the county may pay the total of the cost of all benefits under this section. A county may make such provision, as specified under this paragraph, retroactively for any existing group coverage plan previously adopted by the county.

(Emphasis added). It is our opinion that, pursuant to Section 25-15-101 and Section 25-15-103, the board of supervisors may lawfully provide group life insurance coverage for all or specified groups of its public employees and group hospitalization benefits for such public employees and their dependents, and the county may pay the total of the cost of all benefits under this section. It is within the discretion of the Copiah County Board of Supervisors to determine whether dependents of all employees or only specified groups of employees will be provided such coverage.

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January 31, 2020
Page 2

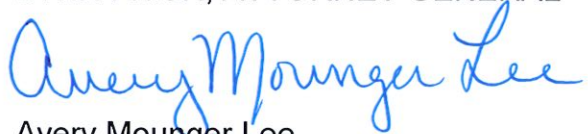
Please note that our office has previously opined that when the governing authorities of a municipality elect to provide group health insurance for their employees and dependents that all employees within a specified group be treated in the same manner regarding the payment of the cost of said dependent coverage. MS AG Op., Creekmore (November 2, 1994). Thus, by analogy, we now opine the same should apply to the governing authorities of a county when electing to provide group health insurance for their employees and dependents within a specified group.

If this office may be of any further assistance to you, please let us know.

Sincerely,

LYNN FITCH, ATTORNEY GENERAL

By:



Avery Mounger Lee
Special Assistant Attorney General

OFFICIAL OPINION