## Interim Report to <br> The Congress on <br> COBRA Premium Assistance

## Interim Report Required by ARRA

Section 3001(a)(11) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA or Act) requires the Secretary of the Treasury to submit an interim report to the Committee on Education and Labor, the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and the Committee on Finance of the Senate regarding the COBRA ${ }^{1}$ premium assistance program contained in ARRA. Section 3001(a)(11)(A) of the Act specifies that the interim report is to include information on: "(i) the number of individuals provided such assistance as of the date of the report; and (ii) the total amount of expenditures incurred (with administrative expenditures noted separately) in connection with such assistance as of the date of the report." A final report is due as soon as practicable after the last period for which COBRA premium assistance is provided, which originally was the 9 -month period ending September 30, 2010 and, after several legislative actions extending the period, is currently the 15 -month period ending August 31, 2011, at the earliest. This document fulfills the requirement for an interim report.

In summary, as many as two million households have benefitted from the COBRA premium assistance program in 2009 at a cost of slightly over $\$ 2$ billion, based on the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) most recently available data.

## Background - Current Law

COBRA requires certain employers (generally those with 20 or more employees), including state and local governments, and certain other entities that maintain group health plans to offer qualified plan participants, including dependents, the opportunity to elect continued coverage under the group health plan for a specified period after the occurrence of certain events, such as termination of employment, that otherwise would cause a termination of coverage. To obtain COBRA continuation coverage, qualified individuals may be required to pay a premium of up to a maximum of 102 percent of the cost of similar coverage provided for active employees. ${ }^{2}$ An excise tax is imposed if a group health plan fails to comply with the COBRA continuation coverage rules.

Under a separate provision of the law, ${ }^{3}$ Federal employees and their families are also entitled to similar temporary continuation coverage under the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) if coverage ends as the result of termination of employment. In addition, many states have laws or regulations that require continuation coverage, often for group health plans maintained by small employers that are not subject to the Federal COBRA continuation coverage requirements. ${ }^{4}$

[^0]ARRA and subsequent legislation ${ }^{5}$ provide a subsidy to employees who terminate employment involuntarily and qualify for COBRA continuation coverage as well as to their qualified family members. The subsidy effectively limits an individual's cost of purchasing continuation coverage to 35 percent of the COBRA premium. COBRA premium assistance also applies to temporary continuation coverage elected under FEHBP and to comparable state-required continuation plans even though these later plans are not part of the original COBRA legislation.

In general terms, the COBRA premium assistance program is administered by the IRS through payroll tax withholding as follows: Workers eligible for COBRA premium assistance send a premium payment to their employers, plan administrators, or insurers for continuation coverage based on the procedures in place before ARRA. Under ARRA, however, a worker's payment must cover only 35 percent of the premium otherwise due. As before ARRA, the employer then retains the worker in its group health plan. Employers initially advance the remaining 65 percent to the insurer (in the case of an insured plan), and effectively are reimbursed by the IRS via adjusted payroll tax withholding. ${ }^{6}$ More specifically, employers (or other entities providing the coverage) are allowed a credit against their payroll taxes for the 65 percent of the premium that is not paid by the individual.

COBRA premium assistance is limited to individuals who qualify for continuation coverage as a result of an involuntary termination of employment between September 1, 2008 and May 31, $2010{ }^{7}$ For some individuals who lost coverage because of an involuntary termination of employment between September 1, 2008 and February 17, 2009 (the date the Act was signed by the President), special statutory transition and notice rules allowed additional opportunities to elect COBRA continuation coverage, in order to make the COBRA premium assistance available to those who lost their jobs before passage of the Act.

COBRA premium assistance is available for a maximum of 15 months, ${ }^{8}$ ending sooner if a qualified beneficiary becomes eligible for coverage under another group health plan or Medicare or if the period of continuation coverage otherwise ends. Eligibility for premium assistance begins to phase out as a taxpayer's modified adjusted gross income for the taxable year in which premium assistance is provided rises above $\$ 125,000(\$ 250,000$ for married taxpayers filing a joint return) and is completely phased out for those with incomes above $\$ 145,000$ ( $\$ 290,000$ for married taxpayers filing a joint return).

[^1]In addition to the IRS, both the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have duties for administering COBRA premium assistance. The Department of Labor has responsibility for dealing with private sector employers with 20 or more employees, while the Department of Health and Human Services has responsibility for Federal, state, local and other non-Federal governmental plans; church plans; and other, mostly private, comparable state continuation plans for employers that have fewer than 20 employees.

Individuals who are participants in plans for private sector employers with 20 or more employees and who are denied treatment as assistance eligible individuals and thus are denied eligibility for the 35 percent premium cap (whether by their plan, employer or insurer) may request an expedited review of the denial by the Department of Labor. The Department of Labor must make a determination within 15 business days of receipt of a completed request for review. The official application form can be filed online or submitted by fax or mail. All other individuals who are participants in plans whose plans, employers or insurers deny them access to premium assistance may request a similar review process through the Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition, as required, the Department of Labor issues model notices and continues to carry out an outreach and education program to inform terminated employees of their rights to premium assistance as well as to inform employers how to comply with the new law.

## Report

COBRA premium assistance has been provided to as many as 2 million households in 2009. ${ }^{9}$ Because many health benefit plans cover spouses and dependents, the number of individuals receiving health coverage for which the COBRA premium assistance was provided is likely to be substantially higher than 2 million. See Table 1 for a breakout of households who receive assistance by state. The attached tables show the counts by state based on the address of the employees' common law employer or the employer's filing agent as provided on the IRS Form 941. The state reported on IRS Form 941 may differ from the state in which the former employees receiving continuation coverage reside or previously worked.

There is some ambiguity in the number of households that received COBRA premium assistance because: (1) Many, but not all, of the early filings in 2010 are likely to represent 2009 claims; (2) some employers may yet submit 2009 claims through amended returns filed later in 2010 (or perhaps even later); and (3) some former employees may have been claimed on multiple filings

[^2]because they were covered by COBRA premium assistance for more than one quarter and their employers submitted claims for them in each such quarter. ${ }^{10}$

Over 300,000 claims were filed by employer tax reporting units through early 2010, as shown on Table 2. ${ }^{11}$ These employers claimed credits for over $\$ 2$ billion in premium assistance against payroll tax withholding, as shown in Table 3.

Based on the IRS data, it is not possible to determine the percentage of former employees eligible for COBRA premium assistance who actually received the premium assistance. However, a study by the Treasury Department's Office of Economic Policy concluded that approximately 15 percent of Unemployment Insurance (UI) beneficiaries in the state of New Jersey received health insurance coverage via COBRA or New Jersey continuation coverage. The study further estimated that between a quarter and a third of COBRA premium assistance eligible UI beneficiaries enrolled in subsidized continuing health insurance. ${ }^{12}$

Since inception of the subsidy program through June 3, 2010, the Department of Labor has received 20,199 requests for expedited review and has closed 19,715 , all but 49 of which were adjudicated within the statutorily required 15 business day time frame. Over 13,000 of these reviews resulted in the employer's determination being overturned, while the employer's determination was upheld in nearly 4,300 cases. In addition, approximately 1,200 were referred to the Department of Health and Human Services. The remaining requests were either closed as incomplete applications, withdrawn by the requester, or denied because the requester had not applied for the premium assistance.

Since inception of the subsidy program through the end of May 2010, the Department of Health and Human Services had received 3,181 requests for expedited review and had closed 3,033, all but 13 of which were adjudicated within the statutorily required 15 business day time frame. The employer's determination was overturned in 1,393 of these cases, the employer's determination was upheld in 659 cases, 503 were referred to the Department of Labor and the remaining were: dismissed as outside of the scope of review (52); withdrawn by the requester (189); or set-aside such that the requester could take more steps and reapply (237).

The Department of Labor is also responsible for conducting outreach and education to inform the employees of their rights as well as inform employers how to comply with the law. Toward that

[^3]end, the Department of Labor developed a dedicated website (www.dol.gov/COBRA) which has over 70,000 subscribers and over 3 million visitors; developed a fact sheet in English and Spanish; developed frequently asked questions for employees and employers; conducted three compliance assistance webcasts with over 20,000 visitors; developed three videos including one in Spanish; updated publications; worked with the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration to inform the One Stop Centers so they could help get the word out to dislocated workers; provided regular updates to stakeholders; and conducted 1,017 outreach events across the country reaching 34,341 individuals. As of the first week of May 2010, the Department of Labor has spent $\$ 4.2$ million in administering COBRA premium assistance.

The Department of Health and Human Services maintained a website and helpline for the public and provided adjudication services for terminated employees who requested review after their former employers denied them access to premium assistance. The Department of Health and Human Services continues to work with state departments of insurance to ensure that the state continuation coverage provisions are accurately interpreted in light of premium assistance under ARRA. The Department of Health and Human Services has spent $\$ 1.9$ million for administering COBRA premium assistance. ${ }^{13}$

Because the IRS administers the processing of the COBRA credit through the payroll tax withholding process, the IRS costs to implement and administer the program are modest. The IRS estimates that it has spent less than $\$ 2$ million to administer the program. In total, the cost of administering the COBRA premium assistance program for all three agencies combined is about $\$ 8$ million, less than 0.5 percent of the more than $\$ 2$ billion of premium assistance provided to date.

[^4]Table 1
Number of Households with Premium Assistance

| State ${ }^{1}$ | 2009 |  |  |  | 2010 | Total ${ }^{3}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 1st Quarter | 2nd Quarter | 3rd Quarter | 4th Quarter | Early Filings ${ }^{2}$ |  |
| Alabama | 144 | 2,497 | 5,700 | 7,174 | 397 | 15,912 |
| Alaska | 29 | 188 | 433 | 617 | ${ }^{4}$ | 1,267 |
| Arizona | 432 | 5,337 | 15,510 | 17,900 | 1,528 | 40,707 |
| Arkansas | 104 | 2,662 | 7,964 | 3,358 | 128 | 14,216 |
| California | 1,491 | 24,808 | 58,835 | 87,892 | 4,663 | 177,689 |
| Colorado | 458 | 5,041 | 10,091 | 15,669 | 957 | 32,216 |
| Connecticut | 445 | 21,846 | 16,461 | 13,463 | 871 | 53,086 |
| Delaware | 24 | 595 | 4,299 | 1,998 | 80 | 6,996 |
| District of Columbia | 178 | 1,094 | 1,573 | 2,051 | 125 | 5,021 |
| Florida | 652 | 13,841 | 102,278 | 158,539 | 1,683 | 276,993 |
| Georgia | 361 | 7,102 | 16,147 | 24,990 | 649 | 49,249 |
| Hawaii | 48 | 920 | 1,385 | 2,163 | 48 | 4,564 |
| Idaho | 387 | 2,733 | 3,239 | 3,791 | 236 | 10,386 |
| Illinois | 1,506 | 17,909 | 33,298 | 57,359 | 2,052 | 112,124 |
| Indiana | 333 | 7,026 | 12,208 | 19,224 | 553 | 39,344 |
| Iowa | 442 | 3,825 | 6,532 | 7,526 | 273 | 18,598 |
| Kansas | 168 | 2,590 | 4,425 | 6,440 | 372 | 13,995 |
| Kentucky | 200 | 2,515 | 4,811 | 9,027 | 407 | 16,960 |
| Louisiana | 192 | 2,248 | 5,888 | 7,715 | 358 | 16,401 |
| Maine | 49 | 940 | 1,632 | 2,444 | 133 | 5,198 |
| Maryland | 316 | 4,436 | 9,176 | 32,207 | 478 | 46,613 |
| Massachusetts | 1,279 | 14,473 | 25,944 | 36,150 | 1,898 | 79,744 |
| Michigan | 1,220 | 15,490 | 23,828 | 40,500 | 2,219 | 83,257 |
| Minnesota | 700 | 13,363 | 23,521 | 32,311 | 1,057 | 70,952 |
| Mississippi | 170 | 1,299 | 2,170 | 2,706 | 190 | 6,535 |
| Missouri | 655 | 7,873 | 15,456 | 19,702 | 758 | 44,444 |
| Montana | 52 | 582 | 946 | 1,138 | 60 | 2,778 |
| Nebraska | 139 | 2,336 | 3,693 | 4,817 | 178 | 11,163 |
| Nevada | 262 | 2,666 | 4,315 | 5,250 | 356 | 12,849 |
| New Hampshire | 193 | 1,704 | 3,483 | 6,067 | 347 | 11,794 |
| New Jersey | 879 | 10,251 | 27,165 | 37,186 | 1,637 | 77,118 |
| New Mexico | 26 | 486 | 798 | 1,119 | 51 | 2,480 |
| New York | 2,011 | 22,366 | 40,710 | 61,793 | 3,273 | 130,153 |
| North Carolina | 561 | 11,547 | 22,054 | 36,703 | 978 | 71,843 |
| North Dakota | 132 | 563 | 1,312 | 1,753 | 56 | 3,816 |
| Ohio | 941 | 13,941 | 29,115 | 43,209 | 1,879 | 89,085 |
| Oklahoma | 290 | 2,193 | 3,584 | 5,046 | 235 | 11,348 |
| Oregon | 911 | 7,794 | 10,557 | 19,413 | 766 | 39,441 |
| Pennsylvania | 1,513 | 22,808 | 31,904 | 47,605 | 3,481 | 107,311 |
| Rhode Island | 133 | 1,499 | 4,336 | 5,265 | 308 | 11,541 |
| South Carolina | 311 | 2,880 | 5,265 | 6,490 | 230 | 15,176 |
| South Dakota | 38 | 474 | 1,060 | 1,209 | 48 | 2,829 |
| Tennessee | 519 | 5,145 | 15,650 | 17,720 | 506 | 39,540 |
| Texas | 1,175 | 25,308 | 43,473 | 58,817 | 1,447 | 130,220 |
| Utah | 222 | 2,818 | 4,285 | 6,133 | 395 | 13,853 |
| Vermont | 49 | 477 | 755 | 904 | 34 | 2,219 |
| Virginia | 608 | 6,602 | 13,272 | 19,919 | 724 | 41,125 |
| Washington | 520 | 8,038 | 14,648 | 21,367 | 1,100 | 45,673 |
| West Virginia | 25 | 341 | 853 | 1,022 | 29 | 2,270 |
| Wisconsin | 1,235 | 14,799 | 16,651 | 23,100 | 1,723 | 57,508 |
| Wyoming | ${ }^{4}$ | 225 | 417 | 489 | 50 | 1,181 |
| Other ${ }^{4}$ | 46 | 1,014 | 1,967 | 4,025 | 26 | 7,078 |
| Grand Total | 24,774 | 351,508 | 715,072 | 1,050,475 | 42,030 | 2,183,859 |

## Notes

1 The state is determined by the address of the employer reporting entity provided on the IRS Form 941.
2 The early filings for 2010 includes some employers claiming the COBRA premium assistance during 2009 and some the claiming the COBRA premium assistance in the first quarter of 2010. Processing of the IRS Forms 941 claiming COBRA premium assistance for the first quarter 2010 was not yet complete.
3 The total may count a household more than once if the eligible individual is claimed in more than one quarterly return.
4 Other including Army PO, Pacific, Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands. The category also includes Wyoming for the first quarter 2009 and Alaska for the early filings for 2010 to prevent disclosure of tax information.

## Data Sources

Internal Revenue Service Office of Research - Compliance Data Warehouse - BMF Transaction History File
Extracted Data File - Business Master File - F941 Data - Processing Cycles 201001-201017
Processed through April 2010.

Table 2
Number of Employer Returns ${ }^{1}$

| State ${ }^{2}$ | 2009 |  |  |  | 2010 | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 1st Quarter | 2nd Quarter | 3rd Quarter | 4th Quarter | Early Filings ${ }^{3}$ |  |
| Alabama | 48 | 650 | 1,150 | 1,466 | 154 | 3,468 |
| Alaska | 18 | 84 | 138 | 190 |  | 430 |
| Arizona | 234 | 1,397 | 1,838 | 2,318 | 380 | 6,167 |
| Arkansas | 40 | 398 | 557 | 673 | 64 | 1,732 |
| California | 708 | 6,198 | 9,385 | 12,907 | 1,532 | 30,730 |
| Colorado | 299 | 1,546 | 2,194 | 2,604 | 382 | 7,025 |
| Connecticut | 240 | 1,348 | 1,736 | 2,284 | 360 | 5,968 |
| Delaware | 15 | 151 | 281 | 335 | 39 | 821 |
| District of Columbia | 34 | 278 | 383 | 501 | 67 | 1,263 |
| Florida | 321 | 2,973 | 4,626 | 5,775 | 576 | 14,271 |
| Georgia | 182 | 1,416 | 2,373 | 2,957 | 220 | 7,148 |
| Hawaii | 17 | 277 | 387 | 514 | 18 | 1,213 |
| Idaho | 58 | 402 | 554 | 624 | 76 | 1,714 |
| Illinois | 773 | 4,092 | 5,595 | 7,063 | 750 | 18,273 |
| Indiana | 164 | 1,365 | 1,976 | 2,498 | 233 | 6,236 |
| Iowa | 175 | 932 | 1,310 | 1,558 | 150 | 4,125 |
| Kansas | 81 | 838 | 1,210 | 1,465 | 171 | 3,765 |
| Kentucky | 95 | 791 | 1,130 | 1,463 | 158 | 3,637 |
| Louisiana | 122 | 750 | 1,104 | 1,338 | 180 | 3,494 |
| Maine | 35 | 282 | 472 | 656 | 60 | 1,505 |
| Maryland | 197 | 1,325 | 1,846 | 2,473 | 214 | 6,055 |
| Massachusetts | 626 | 2,934 | 3,889 | 4,957 | 730 | 13,136 |
| Michigan | 440 | 3,220 | 4,245 | 5,327 | 662 | 13,894 |
| Minnesota | 317 | 2,048 | 2,878 | 3,597 | 416 | 9,256 |
| Mississippi | 77 | 408 | 559 | 683 | 76 | 1,803 |
| Missouri | 361 | 1,778 | 2,379 | 2,977 | 361 | 7,856 |
| Montana | 17 | 190 | 285 | 330 | 36 | 858 |
| Nebraska | 70 | 455 | 606 | 823 | 80 | 2,034 |
| Nevada | 133 | 753 | 942 | 1,118 | 135 | 3,081 |
| New Hampshire | 135 | 650 | 856 | 1,032 | 151 | 2,824 |
| New Jersey | 485 | 2,730 | 3,808 | 5,167 | 651 | 12,841 |
| New Mexico | 17 | 176 | 265 | 337 | 24 | 819 |
| New York | 1,013 | 5,371 | 7,277 | 9,728 | 1,367 | 24,756 |
| North Carolina | 269 | 2,073 | 2,873 | 3,615 | 294 | 9,124 |
| North Dakota | 62 | 197 | 289 | 322 | 32 | 902 |
| Ohio | 416 | 3,126 | 4,492 | 5,870 | 733 | 14,637 |
| Oklahoma | 113 | 645 | 907 | 1,073 | 123 | 2,861 |
| Oregon | 394 | 1,704 | 2,106 | 2,526 | 291 | 7,021 |
| Pennsylvania | 693 | 4,249 | 5,865 | 7,396 | 980 | 19,183 |
| Rhode Island | 73 | 453 | 578 | 716 | 103 | 1,923 |
| South Carolina | 178 | 888 | 1,243 | 1,464 | 98 | 3,871 |
| South Dakota | 18 | 185 | 309 | 348 | 28 | 888 |
| Tennessee | 186 | 1,203 | 1,840 | 2,314 | 159 | 5,702 |
| Texas | 541 | 3,891 | 5,454 | 6,768 | 567 | 17,221 |
| Utah | 109 | 636 | 899 | 1,088 | 129 | 2,861 |
| Vermont | 27 | 212 | 281 | 326 | 22 | 868 |
| Virginia | 327 | 1,807 | 2,670 | 3,362 | 346 | 8,512 |
| Washington | 270 | 2,224 | 2,960 | 3,659 | 377 | 9,490 |
| West Virginia | 14 | 103 | 210 | 261 | 12 | 600 |
| Wisconsin | 459 | 2,422 | 3,037 | 3,803 | 478 | 10,199 |
| Wyoming |  | 103 | 130 | 151 | 27 | 411 |
| Other ${ }^{4}$ | 26 | 212 | 370 | 458 | 13 | 1,079 |
| Grand Total | 11,722 | 74,539 | 104,747 | 133,258 | 15,285 | 339,551 |

## Notes

1 The number of IRS Forms 941 filed by common law employers or the employers' filing agent on which a COBRA premium assistance was claimed. A single corporation or organization may have more than one employer reporting unit filing an IRS Form 941 in a quarter.
2 The state is determined by the address of the employer reporting entity provided on the IRS Form 941.
3 The early filings for 2010 includes some employers claiming the COBRA premium assistance during 2009 and some the claiming the COBRA premium assistance in the first quarter of 2010. Processing of the IRS Forms 941 claiming COBRA premium assistance for the first quarter 2010 was not yet complete.
4 Other including Army PO, Pacific, Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands. The category also includes Wyoming for the first quarter 2009 and Alaska for the early filings for 2010 to prevent disclosure of tax information.

## Data Sources

Internal Revenue Service Office of Research - Compliance Data Warehouse - BMF Transaction History File
Extracted Data File - Business Master File - F941 Data - Processing Cycles 201001-201017
Processed through April 2010

## Table 3

## COBRA Premium Assistance

| (\$ Amount) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| State ${ }^{1}$ | 2009 |  |  |  | 2010 |  |
|  | 1st Quarter | 2nd Quarter | 3rd Quarter | 4th Quarter | Early Filings ${ }^{2}$ | Total |
| Alabama | 58,021 | 2,043,573 | 5,164,609 | 7,422,321 | 409,652 | 15,098,176 |
| Alaska | 13,726 | 202,550 | 483,633 | 961,758 |  | 1,661,666 |
| Arizona | 150,828 | 4,083,605 | 10,230,040 | 15,426,392 | 1,516,000 | 31,406,865 |
| Arkansas | 32,299 | 1,721,405 | 13,740,895 | 2,597,249 | 103,115 | 18,194,962 |
| California | 594,403 | 24,520,498 | 66,327,766 | 128,940,452 | 5,048,837 | 225,431,955 |
| Colorado | 176,557 | 5,060,102 | 10,840,650 | 17,857,083 | 1,018,775 | 34,953,167 |
| Connecticut | 222,321 | 5,305,596 | 12,105,572 | 23,101,602 | 1,102,886 | 41,837,977 |
| Delaware | 12,335 | 775,271 | 5,008,050 | 2,387,447 | 96,680 | 8,279,783 |
| District of Columbia | 28,696 | 797,237 | 1,763,984 | 2,822,700 | 154,674 | 5,567,290 |
| Florida | 238,277 | 12,812,456 | 36,991,778 | 57,060,069 | 1,757,741 | 108,860,321 |
| Georgia | 127,330 | 5,922,272 | 16,812,098 | 29,965,787 | 636,513 | 53,464,001 |
| Hawaii | 17,189 | 610,432 | 1,119,447 | 1,715,527 | 42,689 | 3,505,285 |
| Idaho | 114,018 | 1,723,359 | 2,608,076 | 3,246,331 | 223,520 | 7,915,304 |
| Illinois | 629,495 | 17,555,949 | 35,441,315 | 61,036,368 | 2,505,806 | 117,168,933 |
| Indiana | 142,053 | 5,444,682 | 15,492,514 | 23,556,440 | 676,237 | 45,311,928 |
| Iowa | 169,451 | 3,351,167 | 6,583,685 | 7,777,589 | 244,015 | 18,125,907 |
| Kansas | 57,912 | 2,197,930 | 4,341,126 | 8,235,157 | 335,427 | 15,167,552 |
| Kentucky | 58,530 | 1,997,502 | 4,344,723 | 10,139,435 | 372,629 | 16,912,818 |
| Louisiana | 79,932 | 1,814,965 | 3,836,566 | 6,982,451 | 325,325 | 13,039,238 |
| Maine | 19,193 | 721,004 | 1,782,734 | 3,326,924 | 169,186 | 6,019,040 |
| Maryland | 131,852 | 4,110,617 | 9,833,894 | 17,233,616 | 537,270 | 31,847,249 |
| Massachusetts | 655,754 | 13,915,098 | 32,471,134 | 52,750,262 | 2,534,224 | 102,326,472 |
| Michigan | 524,833 | 13,149,750 | 25,475,205 | 38,623,501 | 2,541,853 | 80,315,142 |
| Minnesota | 251,725 | 10,478,358 | 25,019,022 | 34,591,095 | 1,187,094 | 71,527,294 |
| Mississippi | 54,776 | 1,030,891 | 2,069,595 | 2,898,169 | 136,007 | 6,189,438 |
| Missouri | 219,878 | 6,203,187 | 12,170,775 | 18,794,927 | 748,083 | 38,136,851 |
| Montana | 16,444 | 609,313 | 1,005,069 | 1,243,795 | 68,152 | 2,942,774 |
| Nebraska | 51,859 | 2,237,215 | 3,593,008 | 5,201,621 | 187,639 | 11,271,341 |
| Nevada | 89,570 | 2,295,358 | 4,534,330 | 5,178,213 | 356,127 | 12,453,598 |
| New Hampshire | 94,617 | 1,943,921 | 4,813,651 | 6,480,963 | 428,274 | 13,761,427 |
| New Jersey | 457,649 | 10,121,975 | 30,815,441 | 56,007,323 | 2,073,812 | 99,476,199 |
| New Mexico | 14,126 | 428,808 | 817,883 | 1,189,036 | 71,371 | 2,521,224 |
| New York | 935,212 | 19,482,743 | 46,663,463 | 84,295,252 | 4,063,781 | 155,440,451 |
| North Carolina | 208,745 | 9,682,231 | 19,934,867 | 35,628,593 | 896,814 | 66,351,250 |
| North Dakota | 45,886 | 467,075 | 1,402,650 | 2,218,632 | 48,155 | 4,182,398 |
| Ohio | 354,609 | 11,668,140 | 24,811,223 | 48,507,591 | 1,921,132 | 87,262,696 |
| Oklahoma | 95,616 | 1,843,661 | 3,468,818 | 5,021,010 | 257,455 | 10,686,559 |
| Oregon | 334,892 | 6,542,894 | 9,721,693 | 18,993,097 | 757,543 | 36,350,118 |
| Pennsylvania | 551,565 | 16,766,941 | 32,876,538 | 55,034,776 | 3,541,063 | 108,770,884 |
| Rhode Island | 65,859 | 1,563,588 | 4,476,870 | 6,024,471 | 374,517 | 12,505,305 |
| South Carolina | 111,703 | 2,516,726 | 4,817,045 | 7,153,147 | 236,450 | 14,835,072 |
| South Dakota | 14,466 | 389,865 | 1,042,495 | 1,100,080 | 39,291 | 2,586,197 |
| Tennessee | 164,426 | 4,276,299 | 14,388,068 | 20,188,792 | 535,496 | 39,553,081 |
| Texas | 511,113 | 21,641,178 | 43,049,077 | 65,244,184 | 1,602,577 | 132,048,129 |
| Utah | 104,079 | 2,174,722 | 4,292,554 | 6,720,807 | 431,424 | 13,723,587 |
| Vermont | 16,724 | 386,579 | 778,346 | 1,083,264 | 38,002 | 2,302,915 |
| Virginia | 247,386 | 5,749,316 | 13,426,387 | 21,869,983 | 750,352 | 42,043,423 |
| Washington | 191,903 | 7,340,882 | 15,943,477 | 23,366,096 | 1,135,822 | 47,978,180 |
| West Virginia | 11,745 | 326,938 | 999,970 | 1,253,861 | 40,166 | 2,632,680 |
| Wisconsin | 393,365 | 9,938,608 | 16,394,156 | 25,725,238 | 1,449,838 | 53,901,206 |
| Wyoming |  | 289,669 | 387,996 | 583,055 | 69,258 | 1,329,978 |
| Other ${ }^{3}$ | 15,949 | 518,057 | 1,403,471 | 2,898,365 | 22,007 | 4,857,849 |
| Grand Total | 9,880,892 | 288,752,160 | 667,917,429 | 1,087,661,894 | 45,820,756 | 2,100,033,132 |

## Notes

1 The state is determined by the address of the employer reporting entity provided on the IRS Form 941.
2 The early filings for 2010 includes some employers claiming the COBRA premium assistance during 2009 and some the claiming the COBRA premium assistance in the first quarter of 2010. Processing of the IRS Forms 941 claiming COBRA premium assistance for the first quarter 2010 was not yet complete.
3 Other including Army PO, Pacific, Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands. The category also includes Wyoming for the first quarter 2009 and Alaska for the early filings for 2010 to prevent disclosure of tax information.

## Data Sources

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Extracted Data File - Business Master File - F941 Data - Processing Cycles 201001-201017
Processed through April 2010


[^0]:    1 "COBRA" is the acronym for the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, the law that added the healthcare continuation coverage rules to the Internal Revenue Code (the Code) and parallel provisions in the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) and the Public Health Service Act (PHS Act).
    ${ }^{2}$ See Internal Revenue Code Section 4980B(f)(2)(C); Treasury regulation §54.4980B-8 Q\&A-1.
    ${ }^{3}$ See $\S 8905$ a of title 5 of the United States Code (USC).
    ${ }^{4}$ These programs are often referred to as "mini-COBRA" plans. Depending on state laws, qualified individuals may be required to pay premiums as high as 130 percent of the cost of similar coverage provided for active employees.

[^1]:    ${ }^{5}$ The premium assistance provisions of ARRA were extended on December 19, 2009, by the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2010 (DOD Appropriations Act); on March 2, 2010, by the Temporary Extension Act of 2010 (TEA); and on April 15, 2010, by the Continuing Extension Act of 2010 (CEA).
    ${ }^{6}$ Individuals covered under state mini-COBRA plans send their premium payment to their insurer and their insurer advances the remaining 65 percent, receiving reimbursement by the IRS via adjusted payroll tax withholding.
    ${ }^{7}$ The DOD Appropriations Act, TEA, and CEA extended the period in which involuntary terminations of employment causing a loss of group health coverage would qualify for assistance from December 31, 2009 to May 31, 2010. In addition, TEA and CEA expanded the scope of the premium assistance program to include certain involuntary terminations occurring between March 2, 2010 and May 31, 2010, even though the employee had previously lost coverage due to a reduction in hours occurring between September 1, 2008 and May 31, 2010.
    ${ }^{8}$ The DOD Appropriations Act extended the duration of the premium assistance from 9 months to 15 months.

[^2]:    ${ }^{9}$ The data contained in the attached tables were obtained from the IRS Office of Research. These data were processed to remove obvious errors. For instance, claims containing amounts of premium assistance that were inconsistent with the number of covered employees were excluded from the tabulation. This had the effect of reducing the aggregate amount of premium assistance by just under ten percent. Therefore, the amounts reported in the table may represent a slight underestimate of legitimate claims for premium assistance. The IRS expects that its data collection and data screening procedures will be improved over time to provide a better count in the future.

[^3]:    ${ }^{10}$ Some employers waited until the fourth quarter (filing deadline January 31, 2010) to report their 2009 claims for COBRA premium assistance credits. Other employers reported claims as they occurred each quarter. Some of the former employees of employers that filed on a quarterly basis may have been reported in multiple quarters, resulting in some employees being counted more than once. The numbers in this interim report reflect payroll tax returns processed through April 2010. First quarter returns for 2010 were not due until April $30^{\text {th }}$, and many such returns have not yet been processed. Thus, the early 2010 returns reported here may not include a large number of 2010 claims and therefore may be more properly counted as 2009 claims.
    ${ }^{11}$ Given that some employers file quarterly, there may be some multiple filings by the same employer tax reporting unit.
    ${ }^{12}$ The study, "COBRA Insurance Coverage Since the Recovery Act: Results from New Survey Data," released May 2010, is available at http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/economic-policy/cobra\%20final\%20report.pdf.

[^4]:    ${ }^{13}$ This figure mainly represents contractor costs in running a helpdesk and adjudicating cases subject to review by the Centers for Medicare \& Medicaid Services (CMS), the agency within the Department of Health and Human Services which has been responsible for the ARRA COBRA project. CMS has not historically employed many staff member experts in COBRA or other health insurance issues linked to employment. Nor has it ever created a system to adjudicate related matters.

