

Introduction

Under the Tribute Plan, balances are maintained at the individual member level—not at the policy or group level. While many groups will want their doctors to receive any applicable Tribute Plan distributions, there may be some groups that come to an agreement with their doctors that Tribute Plan distributions should be paid directly to the group. For these situations, an assignment from the doctor to the group is required.

It is The Doctors Company's goal to make the assignment process as easy and simple as possible, while complying with the legal requirements of the Tribute Plan. Any decision on an assignment of a Tribute Plan balance is between the group and its members.

The following provides some additional information on the assignment process and discusses how groups can accomplish an assignment.

Tribute Plan Assignment Requirements

A Tribute Plan balance is only assignable once a participant has met the criteria for receiving a Tribute Plan distribution.¹ The balance may only be assigned to a group that is insured by The Doctors Company on the date that the Tribute Plan distribution criteria are met.

Illustrative Scenarios

The following examples show how the Tribute Plan assignment process would apply under various scenarios:

Example A—A doctor who is a member of a group insured by The Doctors Company accumulates a Tribute Plan balance of \$17,000 with the group at the time of his retirement at age 65 (and continuous coverage by The Doctors Company was greater than five years). The doctor and the group had agreed that any Tribute Plan amount accrued by the doctor would be assigned to the group. The doctor can assign all of his Tribute Plan balance to the group—an assignment that will become effective at the time he retires.

Example B—A doctor leaves a group insured by The Doctors Company and continues being covered by The Doctors Company, having more than five years of continuous coverage at the time of his retirement. However, the above-noted group is not insured by The Doctors Company on the date of the doctor's retirement. An assignment to the group would not be allowed because the group is not insured by The Doctors Company at the time of the doctor's retirement.

Example C—A doctor and her group agree that any Tribute Plan balance accrued by the doctor while she is with the group should be assigned to the group. The doctor accumulates a \$5,000 Tribute Plan balance with the group before leaving to join another group that is not insured by The Doctors Company. The \$5,000 Tribute balance is forfeited (due to the break in coverage by The Doctors Company), so there is no Tribute Plan balance available to be assigned to the predecessor group.

The Tribute[®] Plan—Guide to Assignment of Tribute Balance

Illustrative Scenarios (cont.)

Example D—The doctor in Example C leaves her group (after accumulating the \$5,000 Tribute Plan balance) and joins another group covered by The Doctors Company for the remainder of her career (eight years), accumulating an additional \$10,000 Tribute Plan balance for a total of \$15,000 on her retirement date at age 60. The predecessor group is still insured by The Doctors Company on her retirement date. The doctor may assign some of her Tribute Plan distribution to her predecessor group, effective at the time she retires.

Example E—A doctor who was in solo practice covered by The Doctors Company joins a group insured by The Doctors Company. The doctor accumulated an \$8,000 Tribute balance while in solo practice and then another \$13,000 while he was a member of the group up to his retirement date at age 65 (with greater than five years of continuous coverage by The Doctors Company). The doctor had agreed to assign to the group any Tribute Plan balance accumulated while a member of the group. The doctor can assign some of his Tribute Plan balance to the group, effective at the time he retires.

How Does a Group Obtain an Assignment?

Step 1—Decide with your group members whether you want some or all of their Tribute Plan balances to be assigned to the group. If you do not, no further action is necessary.

Step 2—For any group member from whom you wish to receive a Tribute Plan balance assignment, the group and the group member should complete the accompanying Tribute Plan Assignment Form. The form may be completed either at the time the group member retires or any time prior to that date. However, the form cannot be submitted to The Doctors Company until the member permanently retires, dies, or becomes permanently disabled, because the Tribute Plan does not allow assignments before such date. Forms submitted prematurely will be returned to the sender.

Step 3—Submit the completed Assignment Form to The Doctors Company (or to your agent) at the time of the member's permanent retirement, death, or permanent disability.

Step 4—The Doctors Company will confirm that the assignment is in accordance with the Tribute Plan requirements. After the proper approvals have been obtained, a Tribute Plan distribution check will be issued.

More Information

If you have additional questions about the Tribute Plan assignment process, please contact your agent or The Doctors Company Member Services at (800) 421-2368.

¹The criteria for a Tribute Plan distribution are: (i) permanent retirement from the practice of medicine at age 55 or older with five years of continuous coverage with The Doctors Company on the retirement date, (ii) permanent disability, or (iii) death.

The information in this document is a summary of certain terms and conditions of the Plan Document ("Plan Document") of the Tribute Plan, as established and administered by The Doctors Company. This document does not purport to describe all the terms and conditions of the Tribute Plan. The Plan Document contains a full description of the Tribute Plan. In the event of any conflict, inconsistency, or other difference between this document and the Plan Document, the terms and conditions of the Plan Document will control in every respect.