

(S.B. 983)

(No. 83)

(Approved June 13, 1998)

AN ACT

To amend subsection (b) of Section 5 of Article VI of Act No. 72 of September 7, 1993, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Health Insurance Administration Act," in order to expressly state that the health insurance plan shall remain in effect for the beneficiaries when the member of the Police Force dies under any circumstances; and to require the Puerto Rico Police to consign in its budget of expenses the funds to keep the health insurance plan for these beneficiaries in effect.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

The Legislature approved Act No. 72 of September 7, 1993, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Health Insurance Administration Act," as part of the Health Reform in Puerto Rico. The public policy that had been implemented up to that moment concerning the health services was radically transformed through said Act. The implementation of the new public policy led to the development of a health insurance system which shall eventually provide all residents of the Island with access to high quality medical-hospital services regardless of their financial condition and ability to pay. The primary concern thereof is to provide medical services of excellence to indigent persons through health insurance plans.

Originally, Act No. 72, supra, granted health insurance benefits to the members of the Puerto Rico Police, their spouses and children. However, the law is silent as to the status of the beneficiaries after the member of the Force has died. The Puerto Rico Police is the entity charged with the important task

of safeguarding the life and property of our citizens, and its members play a vitally important role in the development of the strategies addressed to fight crime throughout our Island.

Within that context it becomes necessary to extend the health service opportunities offered to the children and surviving spouses of the members of the Puerto Rico Police who have lost their lives under any circumstances. The purpose of this legislation is to provide social justice for many Puerto Rican families and its intention is to extend the scope of the benefits of the health insurance plan to the beneficiaries thereof.

In view of these considerations, the Legislature of Puerto Rico deems it convenient and necessary to amend subsection (b) of Section 5 of Article VI of Act No. 72 of September 7, 1993, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Health Insurance Administration Act," in order to expressly consign that the health insurance plan shall remain in effect for the beneficiaries when the member of the Police Force dies. In order to make the implementation of this measure feasible, it is hereby provided that the Puerto Rico Police shall consign in its budget of expenses the needed funds to keep the health insurance plan for these beneficiaries in effect. The corresponding contribution shall be equal to the sum the Police officer received at the time of his/her death, as the contribution of the employer to the health insurance plan.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- Subsection (b) of Section 5 of Article VI of Act No. 72 of September 7, 1993, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

"ARTICLE VI

HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

...

Section 5.- Health Insurance Beneficiaries.-

The following persons shall be the beneficiaries of the health insurance plans established in this Act:

(a) ...

(b) Members of the Puerto Rico Police, their spouses and children, pursuant to the provisions of Act No. 53 of June 10, 1996. This benefit shall remain in effect when the member of the Puerto Rico Police dies under any circumstances, while the surviving spouse remains in a state of widowhood or widowerhood and the children are under twenty-one (21) years of age, or those up to 25 years of age and still attending a school of higher learning. The Puerto Rico Police shall consign in its budget of expenses the funds to keep the health insurance plan for these beneficiaries in effect through a contribution equal to the employers contribution that the Police officer received at the time of his/her death for health benefits. The Secretary of the Treasury shall transfer to the Administration the total amount of the employer's contribution consigned in the General Expense Budget to cover the medical-hospital benefits under Act No. 95 of June 29, 1963, as amended, and the corresponding contribution to keep the health insurance benefits for the spouses and children in effect, when the Police officer dies.

...."

Section 2.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

July 13, 1999

Luis G. Hidalgo, Director of the Office of Legislative Services of the Legislature of Puerto Rico, hereby certifies to the Secretary of State that he has duly compared the English and Spanish texts of Act No. 83 (S.B. 983) of the 3rd Session of the 13th Legislature of Puerto Rico, entitled:

AN ACT to amend subsection (b) of Section 5 of Article VI of Act No. 72 of September 7, 1993, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Health Insurance Administration Act," in order to expressly state that the health insurance plan shall remain in effect for the beneficiaries when the member of the Police Force dies under any circumstances; etc.,

and finds the same are complete, true and correct versions of each other.

Luis G. Hidalgo