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Sec. 145.325. (A) Except as otherwise provided in division (B) of this section, the board of the public employees retirement system shall make available to each retirant OR DISABILITY BENEFIT RECIPIENT receiving a monthly allowance or benefit on or after January 1, 1968, who

has attained the age of sixty-five years, and who is not eligible to receive hospital insurance benefits under the federal old age, survivors, and disability insurance program, hospital insurance coverage substantially equivalent to the federal hospital insurance benefits, Social Security Amendments of 1965, 79 Stat. 291, 42 U.S.C.A. 1395c, as amended. This coverage shall also be made available to the spouse, widow, or widower of such retirant OR DISABILITY BENEFIT RECIPIENT provided such spouse, widow, or widower has attained age sixty-five and is not eligible to receive hospital insurance benefits under the federal old age, survivors, and disability insurance program. The widow or widower of a retirant OR DISABILITY BENEFIT RECIPIENT shall be eligible for such coverage only if he or she is the recipient of a monthly allowance or benefit from this system. One-half of the cost of the premium for the spouse shall be paid from the appropriate funds of the public employees retirement system and one-half by the recipient of the allowance or benefit.

The cost of such coverage, paid from the funds of the system, shall be included in the employer's rate provided by sections 145.48, 145.49, and 145.50 of the Revised Code. The retirement board is authorized to make all necessary rules pursuant to the purpose and intent of this section, and shall contract for such coverage as provided in section 145.58 of the Revised Code.

(B) The board need not make the hospital insurance coverage described in division (A) of this section available to any person for whom it is prohibited by section 145.58 of the Revised Code from paying or reimbursing the premium cost of such insurance.

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