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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

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FAQ's - Change in Maximum Allowable UI Benefit Weeks

Q: Why did the maximum allowable benefit weeks for new unemployment claims drop from 30 to 26 weeks?

A: Recently, the twelve-month average unemployment rate in all measured metropolitan areas in Massachusetts reached 5.1% or lower.

The Massachusetts Unemployment Insurance statute, G.L. c. 151A, §30(a), provides that if the twelve-month average unemployment rate is equal to or below 5.1% in all measured metropolitan areas, there is an automatic adjustment to the maximum allowable benefit period for new unemployment claims from 30 to 26 weeks.

Q: When will the change be in effect?

A: This change goes into effect for all unemployment claims filed on or after March 31, 2019.

Q: Do I need to take any action?

A: No. Claimants should file claims and complete weekly certifications through UI Online as they normally would do.

Q: What will happen to my claim if it was filed prior to 3/31/2019?

A: Only those individuals filing new claims on or after March 31, 2019 will be subject to the adjusted maximum allowable benefit period of 26 weeks. All claimants who filed new claims prior to that date will maintain up to a 30-week maximum allowable benefit period for the duration of their claim.

Q: What if the unemployment rate increases during my claim?

A: Under the statute, if the monthly unemployment rate rises above 5.1% in any of the Massachusetts measured metropolitan areas, all claimants, regardless of initial filing date, will once again be eligible for a maximum benefit period of 30 weeks.

Q: Will the change in allowable benefit weeks lower my weekly benefit amount?

A: The statute doesn't change the formula for calculating the weekly benefit amount.