§ 165-a. Continuation of state health benefit plans for survivors of employees of the state and/or of a political subdivision or of a public authority. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the president shall permit the unremarried spouse and the dependents, otherwise qualified as eligible for coverage under regulations of the president, of a person who was an employee of the state and/or of a political subdivision thereof or of a public authority for not less than ten years, provided however, that the ten-year service requirement shall not apply to such employees on active military duty in connection with the Persian Gulf conflict who die on or after August second, nineteen hundred ninety while in the Persian Gulf combat zone or while performing such military duties, or the unremarried spouse and the dependents, otherwise qualified as eligible for coverage under regulations of the president, to any employee of the state and/or of a political subdivision thereof or of a public authority who retires with less than ten years of service with an accidental disability retirement benefit or a performance of duty disability pension, who had been a participant in any of the state health benefit plans, to continue under the coverage which such deceased employee had in effect at the time of death, upon the payment at intervals determined by the president of the full cost of such coverage, provided, however, that the unremarried spouse of an active employee of the State who died on or after April first nineteen hundred seventy-five and before April first nineteen hundred seventy-nine who timely elected to continue dependent coverage, or such unremarried spouse who timely elected individual coverage shall continue to pay at intervals determined by the president one-quarter of the full cost of dependent coverage and provided further, that, with regard to employees of the State, where and to the extent that an agreement pursuant to article fourteen of this chapter so provides, or where the director of employee relations, with respect to employees of the State who are not included within a negotiating unit so recognized or certified pursuant to article fourteen of this chapter whom the director of employee relations determines should be declared eligible for the continuation of health benefit plans for the survivors of such employees of the State, the president shall adopt regulations providing for the continuation of such health benefit or benefits by the unremarried spouse of an active employee of the State who died on or after April

first nineteen hundred seventy-nine who elects to continue dependent coverage, or such unremarried spouse who elects individual coverage, and upon such election shall pay at intervals determined by the president one-quarter of the full cost of dependent coverage and, provided further with respect to enrolled employees of a political subdivision or public authority in a negotiating unit recognized or certified pursuant to article fourteen of this chapter, where an agreement negotiated pursuant to said article so provides, and with respect to enrolled employees of a political subdivision or public authority not included within a negotiating unit so recognized or certified, at the discretion of the appropriate political subdivision or public authority, the unremarried spouse of an active employee of the political subdivision or of the public authority who died on or after April first nineteen hundred seventy-five, may elect to continue dependent coverage or such unremarried spouse may elect individual coverage and upon such election shall pay at intervals determined by the president one-quarter of the full cost of dependent coverage.

The president shall adopt such regulations as may be required to carry out the provisions of this subdivision which shall include, but need not be limited to, provisions for filing application for continued coverage.

Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the survivors of any employee subject to this section shall be entitled to the health benefits granted pursuant to this section, provided that such employee died while on active duty pursuant to Title 10 of the United States Code, with the armed forces of the United States or to service in the uniformed services pursuant to Chapter 43 of Title 38 of the United States Code, and such member died on such active duty or service in the uniformed services on or after June fourteenth, two thousand five as a result of injuries, disease or other medical condition sustained or contracted in such active duty with the armed forces of the United States or in the uniformed services.