§ 135-5.6. Employees of the University of North Carolina Health Care System.

(a) All employees of the University of North Carolina Health Care System who (i) are employed before January 1, 2024, and (ii) are members of either the Retirement System or the Optional Retirement Program before January 1, 2024, shall retain membership in that Retirement System or that Optional Retirement Program.

(b) Employees of the University of North Carolina Health Care System who are hired on or after January 1, 2024, shall not be eligible for membership in the Retirement System. The University of North Carolina Health Care System shall offer employees of the System who are hired on or after January 1, 2024, any of the following benefits:

(1) Membership in the Optional Retirement System.

(2) Enrollment in a similar benefit to the Optional Retirement System pursuant to G.S. 116-350.30.

(3) A choice between the options provided in subdivision (1) and subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(c) If any individual ceases to be employed by the University of North Carolina Health Care System on or after January 1, 2024, and is later rehired by the University of North Carolina Health Care System, then that individual shall be treated as an employee newly hired on or after January 1, 2024, for the purposes of this section.

(d) The University of North Carolina Health Care System shall continue to report the payroll of employees employed as of December 31, 2023, and shall continue to remit the employee and employer contributions for employees retaining membership in the Retirement System or the Optional Retirement Program until none exist.

(e) Notwithstanding subsections (b) and (c) of this section, an individual hired by the University of North Carolina Health Care System on or after January 1, 2024, who is a contributing member of the Retirement System or the Optional Retirement Program immediately prior to that individual's date of hire by the University of North Carolina Health Care System shall, for the purposes of this section, be treated as having been employed as of December 31, 2023. If, at the time of entering eligible employment with the University of North Carolina Health Care System, that individual is a member of the Retirement System and was not previously offered an election to participate in the Optional Retirement Program, then that individual may elect to continue contributing membership in the Retirement System or to participate in the Optional Retirement Program.

(f) Subsections (b) and (c) of this section shall not apply to law-enforcement officers, as defined under G.S. 143-166.30, employed by the University of North Carolina Health Care System. (2023-134, s. 4.10(p); 2024-1, s. 1.7(h); 2025-19, s. 8(a).)