



UNITED STATES  
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
WASHINGTON, DC 20415-0001

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

March 6, 2003

Dear Federal Employees Health Benefits Program Carriers

I am taking this opportunity to bring to your attention a matter that is vitally important in the uncertain times in which we find ourselves. We need your help to make certain that our Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB) members can get additional supplies of medications as backup for emergency situations.

We especially need to build in flexibility in our delivery systems so that Reservists and National Guard members can meet their medium-term drug supply needs.

I understand that you may have concerns about how to administer your prescription drug benefits so that flexibilities are in place and, at the same time, satisfy other requirements that affect the dispensing of drugs. As always, we do not intend to tell you how to meet the goals. We appreciate your sensitivity to the needs of your federal members and appreciate your cooperation in meeting these needs. There are a number of steps we have taken and now we are asking you, our business partners, to help by doing your part.

Our staff is ready to consult with you on a variety of needs and situations, including:

- Enrollees' potential need for six days of daily medicines on hand as an emergency back up.
- Flexibility in your prescription renewal policies so that the extra six days does not trip a non-approval because of time.
- Flexibility so that reservists and the National Guard can meet medium term drug supply needs. At this time, a 90 day supply for called-to-duty reservists and guards should be dispensed. We are working with the reserve corps to establish some firm thresholds.

These are anxious times. We are very much focused on security for all Americans – security abroad and security at home, so I am personally asking for your help to make health security a part of that equation. President Bush has made high-quality, affordable health care for all Americans a national goal. Your challenge – and mine – is to keep our program a model. With your partnership, the FEHB program will continue to be a source of security for our public servants and inspiration for all Americans. I have asked Abby Block to immediately take the lead in working with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kay Coles James".

Kay Coles James  
Director