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# FEHB Program Carrier Letter

## All Carriers

U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Insurance Services Program

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**Letter No. 2005-07**

**Date:** March 23, 2005

Fee-for-service [ 6 ]    Experience-rated HMO [ 7 ]    Community-rated HMO [ 6 ]

**SUBJECT: Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Requirement to Provide Section 508 Web Accessible Compliant Health Plan Brochures for the Visually Impaired.**

In 2004, OPM provided health plans with new Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) prototype brochure documents. We made changes to the prototype documents to make the 2005 FEHB brochures 508 compliant. Although we gave health plans instructions on how to apply the technical requirements to their own brochure document, creating a 508 compliant brochure was a challenge despite a solid effort by OPM and the health plans. However, we achieved an important first step in meeting the needs of the visually impaired.

This Carrier Letter provides new and important instructions for meeting OPM's requirement to provide Section 508 Web accessible health plan brochures. These instructions apply to current year 2005 and forthcoming year 2006 health plan brochures. Also included is the most up-to-date proposed language for the 2006 brochure for your review.

**Section 508 Web Compliant 2005 Health Plan Brochure Instructions and Process:**

- We require all health plans use Microsoft (MS) Word 2002 version or higher.
- Plans need to convert their existing 2005 brochure to MS Word 2002 or higher format.
- Health plans are responsible for creating a 2005 PDF brochure that meets Section 508 Web accessible compliance requirements. We require each plan to provide a certificate of compliance from a vendor specializing in 508 compliance work, as well as a compliant and readable PDF brochure.
- Health plans must send the PDF brochure to their OPM contract specialist no later than April 29, 2005.
- The plan must send the PDF electronically through the link, [www.opm.gov/filemanager](http://www.opm.gov/filemanager). (See **Attachment 1** for instructions). Notify the contract specialist when file is uploaded on the site.

- OPM's web group will check brochure compliance through JAWS software.
- If the brochure document meets the "screened/read" review, we will replace the current 2005 version on the FEHB web site.
- If the brochure document does not meet the "screened/read" review, we will return it to the health plan for correction.
- The plan must correct any brochure documents we return and send them back to the contract specialist within 10 business days of receipt.

**Section 508 Web Compliant 2006 Health Plan Brochure Instructions and Process:**

- The 508 compliant 2005 brochure, which the plan prepares in MS Word 2002 format or higher, will be the environment for negotiation for the 2006 brochure language.
- When we complete the negotiation process, each plan must provide a certificate of compliance from a vendor specializing in 508 compliance work, as well as a compliant and readable PDF brochure
- Health plans must send the PDF brochure file to their OPM contract specialist within the deadline the contracting officer sets.
- The plan must send the PDF electronically through the link, [www.opm.gov/filemanager](http://www.opm.gov/filemanager). (See **Attachment 1** for instructions). Notify the contract specialist when file is uploaded on the site.
- OPM's web group will check brochure compliance through JAWS software.
- If the brochure document meets the "screened/read" review, we will replace the current 2005 version on the FEHB web site.
- If the brochure document does not meet the "screened/read" review, we will return it to the health plan for correction.
- The plan must correct any brochure documents we return and send them back to the contract specialist within 10 business days of receipt.

The additional cost a plan incurs to obtain 508 compliance certification is an allowable expense for Experience-rated plans. We will address the additional expenses that Community-rated plans incur during the normal rate reconciliation process.

**2006 Proposed Brochure Language Changes:**

**Attachment 2** includes the proposed 2006 brochure language changes for carrier review. OPM appreciates your comments and suggestions in support of clear and accurate brochures. You should send your comments to Jay Fritz of the Program Planning and Evaluation Group at [Jay.Fritz@opm.gov](mailto:Jay.Fritz@opm.gov) by March 28, 2005. Also send a copy of your comments to your OPM contract specialist.

**Changes in 2005 Brochure Template Design and Layout---Revisions:**

In order to assist you and your vendor in achieving Section 508 Web accessibility for the 2005 brochure, we prepared a reference tool indicating the **required** revisions which must be included in the 2005 brochure document. Refer to **Attachment 3, and supplemental pages numbered one through four.**

To further assist you and your vendor in achieving Section 508 Web accessibility, the reference tool also includes **suggested** revisions which should be included in the 2005 brochure document. Refer to **Attachment 3, and supplemental pages numbered five through seven.**

We appreciate your support and cooperation in implementing these compliance requirements. Please direct any questions to your OPM contract specialist.

Sincerely,

Frank D. Titus  
Assistant Director  
for Insurance Services