

Office of Personnel Management
Retirement and Insurance Service

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Benefits Administration Letter

Number: 96-203

Date: May 17, 1996

SUBJECT: Empire Blue Cross & Blue Shield HEALTHNET Enrollment Areas

This is to advise you of the special belated open season opportunity that OPM has authorized for certain enrollees in the FEHB health plan Empire Blue Cross & Blue Shield HEALTHNET located in New York.

Attached for your information is a notice OPM sent to personnel offices of Federal employees who live in the affected areas. This notice explains the circumstances where we have authorized belated open season enrollments for these employees.

Our source for personnel office addresses is the Central Personnel Data File (CPDF). If your agency is not included in the CPDF, we cannot identify your field installations. Therefore, we request that you send a copy of the attachment to each of your field installations that has employees in the affected counties. The counties are listed in the attachment.



Abby L. Block, Chief
Insurance Policy
and Information Division

Attachment



United States
**Office of
Personnel Management**

Washington, D.C. 20415

In Reply Refer To:

Your Reference:
May 17, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR AGENCY HEADS AND PERSONNEL OFFICERS IN CERTAIN
NEW YORK COUNTIES

FROM:

LUCRETIA F. MYERS *Lucretia F. Myers*
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
FOR INSURANCE PROGRAMS

Subject:

Empire Blue Cross & Blue Shield HEALTHNET Enrollment Areas

Introduction

This is to inform you that OPM is authorizing a belated open season enrollment opportunity for certain employees enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plan, Empire Blue Cross & Blue Shield HEALTHNET, which serves a number of New York counties.

Erroneous enrollment areas

The 1996 HEALTHNET brochure indicated that certain counties formerly in Region I (enrollment codes S11 and S12) would be in Region II (enrollment codes S21 and S22), while other counties formerly in Region II, would be in Region I. When we discovered this unapproved change, we required the plan to withdraw these changes and return to the 1995 regional configuration.

The affected counties are: Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Dutchess, Essex, Fulton, Greene, Montgomery, North Saratoga, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Schoharie, South Saratoga, Sullivan, Ulster, Warren, and Washington.

Effect on employees

Since the premiums are different for the two regions, some enrollees have been paying more than they should, while others have been paying less. There is no effect on benefits--benefits are the same, regardless of the enrollment code.

What can employees do?

Affected employees may make a belated open season enrollment change. The change would be effective retroactive to the first day of the first pay period beginning in 1996.

Employees currently enrolled under enrollment codes S11, S12, S21, or S22 may complete an SF 2809 to enroll in the correct region or they may enroll in any other plan for which they are otherwise eligible. However, since the change will be retroactive, a change to another plan could adversely affect enrollees who have received health care from HEALTHNET during 1996. HEALTHNET would then seek repayment for that care from the former enrollee. The enrollee's new plan might not cover health care received through HEALTHNET providers.

Employees are not required to correct their enrollment code, but they may do so if they wish.

How will employees learn about this?

The plan is notifying the enrollees about the error in the enrollment area and giving them the correct information. The notice advises the enrollees to contact their personnel office for information about changing their enrollment.

The agency is not expected to notify enrollees individually, but we request that you display the attached announcement in areas where employees are likely to see it. In addition, personnel offices must advise enrollees who ask about this error and must accept SF 2809's from employees who want to change their enrollment code.

When can employees make this change?

Employees who want to change their enrollment must submit an SF 2809 to their employing office no later than June 28, 1996.

Processing the SF 2809

Please note in the "Remarks" that this is a belated open season change.

Attachment



United States
**Office of
Personnel Management**

Washington, D.C. 20415

Reference:

In Reply Refer To:

Your

ATTENTION:

**Employees enrolled in the
Empire Blue Cross & Blue Shield HEALTHNET health plan**

There is an error on your brochure cover that incorrectly identifies counties in two of the regions served by the Empire Blue Cross & Blue Shield HEALTHNET health plan. Since the premium rates for the regions are different, some employees may be paying more and some less than the correct enrollment code would require.

The plan will send you a notice explaining this error and how it may affect you. Be sure to read the notice carefully when you receive it. If you don't receive the notice, you may contact the plan for information as follows:

Ms. Valerie A. Baginski
(212) 476-7802

If you find you are in the wrong enrollment code for the region in which you live, you may change your enrollment to the correct enrollment code. Your personnel office can give you information about the kind of changes you can make in your enrollment and how to make them.

If you want to make an enrollment change because of this error, you must file your Health Benefits Registration Form (SF 2809) with your employing office no later than June 28, 1996.