
Letter Number 2018-01

Date: March 2018

Dental Plans [X]

Vision Plans [X]

Subject: Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) Call Letter

This is our annual call letter to FEDVIP carriers for proposals to amend your benefits and rates for the 2019 contract year. This letter provides our goals and policies for the upcoming negotiations. Your benefit and rate proposals for the plan year beginning January 1, 2019, must be submitted on or before May 31, 2018, to OPM.

We encourage both dental and vision plans to review your levels of coverage and consider any necessary benefit changes and/or modifications that will provide accurate and appropriate delivery of services for the current benefits. We also encourage carriers to include providers in their networks that are qualified to provide services for patients with disabilities.

Opioid Abuse Prevention

FEDVIP carriers can play a vital role in addressing the national opioid epidemic. Studies reveal that prescription medications—even when taken as directed—are often the gateway to addiction. Research also shows that 54 percent of those receiving an opioid prescription for dental pain have medication left over.¹ Please urge your network dental providers to make non-opioid regimens their first choice for

¹ Maughan, B.C., et al. (2016). Unused Opioid Analgesics and Drug Disposal Following Outpatient Dental Surgery: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. 168: 328-334.

pain management. When opioids are needed, experts advise prescribing the lowest possible dose and shortest treatment duration. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) notes that 3 days or less will often be sufficient; more than seven days will rarely be needed.² Dental providers should also educate their patients about the proper disposal of unused medications. Attached is the October 2017 OPM Utilization Review newsletter on the topic of opioids for your review.

FEDVIP-TRICARE Implementation

We welcome the TRICARE community to FEDVIP. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017, enacted on December 23, 2016, includes a provision in section 715 that extends FEDVIP eligibility to certain beneficiaries under the TRICARE program. This new population will enroll during the 2018 Federal Benefits Open Season with coverage beginning on January 1, 2019. This inclusion will give eligible TRICARE beneficiaries a choice of dental plan options and the ability to also select a vision plan for the first time. We remind carriers that the FEDVIP contract, regulations and guidance will govern the program and this new population. We encourage carriers to carefully examine their proposals to ensure that this new population is incorporated efficiently and cost-effectively. Additional information regarding this newly eligible group will be forthcoming as soon as possible. We will also provide guidance concerning this group in the rate instructions which we will send to you by mid-April.

All proposals must be cost neutral; you cannot increase premiums in order to offer enhanced benefits. Rates must also adhere to any and all profit and/or administrative cost limits noted in your contract.

If you have any questions, please contact Jillian Gill at (202) 606-1689 or email at: jillian.gill@opm.gov.

² Dowell D, Haegerich TM, Chou R. CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain — United States, 2016. MMWR Recomm Rep 2016; 65(No. RR-1):1–49. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.rr6501e1>

We look forward to working with you in the upcoming contract year.

Sincerely,

Alan O. Spielman, Director
Healthcare and Insurance

Encl.: