



***Retirement and Insurance Service
Benefits Administration Letter***

Number: 03-201

Date: January 31, 2003

Subject: Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program: Opportunity for Certain Former CareFirst Blue Choice and Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) Service Benefit Plan Members to Change Enrollment

CareFirst Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) and Children's Hospital were involved in a lengthy contract dispute which continued beyond the close of last fall's Open Season which ended on December 9, 2002. OPM staff monitored the negotiations process from the inception and was prepared to take appropriate action as soon as the dispute was resolved. CareFirst BCBS and Children's Hospital have now announced they have reached agreement, and Children's Hospital will continue to participate in CareFirst BCBS's preferred provider network for the next three years.

Some Federal employees may have switched their health plan because of concerns about Children's Hospital being in their plan's network. We are instructing you to allow employees who switched from either CareFirst Blue Choice or BCBS Service Benefit Plan and have not filed claims under their new plans, the opportunity to make a belated open season change to switch back to their original plan. The opportunity to change will begin immediately and continue through March 3, 2003. The effective date of these changes will be the first pay period on or after January 1, 2003.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Abby L. Block".

Abby L. Block
Assistant Director
for Insurance Programs

*Civil Service
Retirement
System*

*Federal Employees'
Group Life
Insurance Program*

*Federal Employees
Health Benefits
Program*

*Federal Employees
Retirement
System*

*Federal
Long Term
Care Insurance
Program*