

**Office of  
Personnel Management**  
The Federal Government's Human Resources Agency



***Tribal Benefits Administration Letter***

**Number:** 18-703

**Date:** October 26, 2018

**Subject: 2018 FEHB Open Season for Tribal Employees: FEHB Program  
Significant Plan Changes**

This Tribal Benefits Administration Letter (TBAL) is the third in our series of 2018 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season for Tribal Employees TBALs. This TBAL provides information on significant plan changes for the FEHB Program for 2019. This year's Open Season for Tribal Employees will run from Monday, November 12, through Monday, December 10, 2018.

This TBAL provides important information on the significant changes affecting certain plans in the FEHB Program for the upcoming Open Season. The **first attachment** to this TBAL identifies the plans and their corresponding significant changes. Some of these events will require action on the part of tribal employers and tribal employees.

Please note there are plans leaving the FEHB Program at the end of 2018. Tribal employees in these terminating plans **must** enroll in a new plan during Open Season or they will be enrolled in the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan FEP Blue Focus (the lowest-cost nationwide plan option for 2019 as determined by OPM). To inform employees of these terminating plans, please distribute this list to your tribal employees. It is your responsibility to monitor tribal employees who are covered by these terminating plans and follow up with those who have not submitted an enrollment change before the end of Open Season.

**TIP:** Distribute the attached list of significant FEHB plan changes to all employees so they can check to see if they will be affected by 2019 FEHB plan or service area terminations.

**Table 1: Plans Leaving the FEHB Program**

**What Must Tribal Employees Do?**

- Tribal employees in terminating plans (**Table 1**) **must** enroll in a new health plan during Open Season if they want coverage. If they do not enroll in a new FEHB plan, they will be enrolled in the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan FEP Blue Focus (the lowest-cost nationwide plan option for 2019 as determined by OPM).

- **New Coverage:** Coverage under an FEHB enrollee's new health plan will be effective beginning January 1, 2019. FEHB enrollees will remain covered and receive the 2018 benefits of the old plan until coverage under the new plan becomes effective.

### What Must You Do?

- You must notify tribal employees enrolled in the plans listed in **Table 1** to select new plans. Advise your tribal employees if they do not choose new FEHB plans, they will be enrolled in the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan FEP Blue Focus (the lowest-cost nationwide plan option for 2019 as determined by OPM).
- Distribute copies of this list to tribal employees with your tribal employer's notice about Open Season along with copies of the **second attachment**, *FastFacts: What to do When Your Health Plan is Terminating Coverage in Your Area or Leaving the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program*.
- Follow up with employees in these plans and remind them to select new plans.
- **Belated changes:** Some tribal employees still might not receive instructions to change plans during Open Season. We encourage you to be liberal in accepting belated Open Season changes from tribal employees enrolled in terminating plans or plans with service area reductions and terminating enrollment codes.

### What Will Health Plans Do?

**Plan Notification:** The plans in **Table 1** have been instructed to notify FEHB enrollees of the need to select new FEHB plans for 2019; however, because some plans' enrollment and address lists may not be up-to-date, we encourage you to accept belated changes.

### Table 2: FEHB Plans Reducing Service Areas without Terminating Enrollment Codes

#### What Must Tribal Employees Do?

Tribal employees in the service areas being terminated should elect a new FEHB health plan for 2019; however, tribal employees who do not choose a new FEHB health plan will only have emergency services where they live and will have to travel to their plan's remaining service area to receive full benefits.

### What Must You Do?

- You must notify tribal employees enrolled in the plans listed in **Table 2** to select a new FEHB plan. Advise your tribal employees if they do not choose a new FEHB plan, they will only have emergency services where they live and they will have to travel to their plan's remaining service area to receive full benefits in 2019.
- Distribute copies of this list to employees with your tribal employer's notice about Open Season along with copies of the **second attachment**, *FastFacts: What to do When Your Health Plan is Terminating Coverage in Your Area or Leaving the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program*.

- Follow up with tribal employees in these plans and remind them to select a new FEHB plan.
- **Belated changes:** Some tribal employees still might not receive instructions to change plans during Open Season. We encourage you to be liberal in accepting belated Open Season changes from employees enrolled in the plan reducing its service area.

### **What Will Health Plans Do?**

**Plan Notification:** The plans in **Table 2** have been instructed to notify FEHB enrollees that their respective service areas are being terminated. If FEHB enrollees do not choose another FEHB health plan, the enrollees will only have emergency services where they live and they will have to travel to their plan's remaining service area to receive full benefits in 2019. However, because a plan's enrollment and address lists may not be up-to-date, we encourage you to accept belated changes.

### **Table 3: FEHB Plans Terminating Option and Enrollment Codes**

#### **What Must Employees Do?**

- Tribal employees in the plan dropping an option (**Table 3**) may choose a new health plan during Open Season or remain with their current plan and be switched automatically into the plan's option specified in **Table 3**.
- **New Coverage:** Coverage under an enrollee's new health plan or option will be effective January 1, 2019.

#### **What Must You Do?**

- Advise your tribal employees who are enrolled in the plan that is dropping an option (**Table 3**) that if they do not choose a new health plan, they will be automatically transferred into the plan's option as specified in **Table 3**.
- Distribute copies of this list to tribal employees with your tribal employer's notice about Open Season.
- Follow up with tribal employees in the plan and remind them that if they do not choose a new health plan, they will be automatically transferred into the plan's option specified in **Table 3**.
- **Belated changes:** Some tribal employees still might not receive instructions regarding their plan dropping an option. We encourage you to be liberal in accepting belated Open Season changes from tribal employees enrolled in the plan dropping an option listed in **Table 3**.

#### **What Will the Health Plan Do?**

- **Plan Notification:** The plan in **Table 3** has been instructed to notify enrollees that their current plan option is being discontinued and that if they do not change to another plan during Open Season, they will be switched automatically into the plan's option specified in **Table 3**.

**Table 4: Plans Adding New Options and Enrollment Codes**

**Table 5: Service Area Expansions Without New Enrollment Codes**

**Table 6: Service Area Expansions Adding New Enrollment Codes**

**Table 7: New Plan Entering the FEHB Program**

**What Must You Do?**

You must include the plans with new options, the plans with expanded service areas, and the new plan entering the FEHB Program (Tables 4-7) when you count the number of eligible tribal employees and place your order for brochures.

We encourage you and your tribal employees to visit our website at [www.opm.gov/tribalprograms](http://www.opm.gov/tribalprograms) for the most up-to-date information. Please note that 2019 Plan information will be posted on our website in early November.

We look forward to working with you to ensure tribal employees have a successful Open Season.

Sincerely,

Alan P. Spielman  
Director  
Healthcare and Insurance

Attachments