
FEHB Program Carrier Letter

All Carriers

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Insurance Services Program

Letter No. 2003-24

Date: August 12, 2003

Fee-for-service [23] Experience-rated HMO [23] Community-rated HMO [22]

SUBJECT: Accuracy of Health Plan Web Site Information

The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) annual open season is quickly approaching. Individuals currently enrolled in your plans as well as potential enrollees are beginning to research plans based on their health care needs and to make sure that their physician is a participating provider. This means they will be researching plan web sites, in particular on-line provider directories.

Enrollees depend on the accuracy of the provider information contained in web site databases to find a qualified physician and maximize their benefits. In most cases the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will find in favor of the enrollee in disputes with the carrier when they rely on inaccurate information on a carrier's web site. We urge you to review your sites to be sure that the information is current and accurate.

I am proud of the fact that the nation's Federal employees are well educated health care consumers who are fully capable of making critical health care expenditure and coverage decisions for themselves and their families. As I have mentioned before, Federal employees rely on our carriers to provide accurate data, and you have responded to our calls over the past several years to post more information regarding providers and prevention guidance on line.

The importance of on-line information is highlighted in a *Washington Post* article dated August 11, 2003, that mentions several problems found during a review of web sites of four large health insurers that serve the Washington, D.C. region. These inaccuracies include "wrong phone numbers and addresses and doctors who are deceased, who closed their practices more than two years ago or whose licenses have been suspended."

The article underscores the importance of having procedures in place to assure the accuracy of your on-line provider directories.

Thank you once again for your efforts to deliver high quality services to American civil service professionals.



Kay Coles James
Director