



**United States
Office of Personnel Management
Retirement and Insurance Service**

Benefits Administration Letter

Number: 97-401

Date: August 14, 1997

Subject: Federal Employees Health Benefits Program Open Season - Introduction

DATES

The 1997 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program open season will be held from November 10 through December 8, 1997.

BALs

As we proceed with our preparations for the 1997 open season, this introductory BAL (Benefits Administration Letter) will be followed by a series of BALs designed to give you information about ordering open season materials, significant FEHB plan changes for 1998, suggested open season notices for your employees, and other useful information that will enable you to conduct a successful open season at your agency.

EMAIL HOTLINE

The telephone open season hotline used during the past several open seasons has been replaced this year with an Internet email hotline.

Address

The address for the open season email Hotline is
HOTLINE@opm.gov.

Purpose

The email Hotline will enable us to answer agencies' open season questions quickly and efficiently. If you have a question about an open season BAL, or any other questions about open season, just direct your question to HOTLINE@opm.gov. Be sure to include your phone number in case we need to call you.

**Civil Service
Retirement
System**

**Federal Employees
Group Life
Insurance**

**Federal Employees
Health Benefits
Program**

**Federal Employees
Retirement
System**

Benefits Administration Letter 97-401

Users

The email Hotline is for the use of **agency headquarters Insurance Officers only**. Employees should direct their questions to their personnel offices. Personnel offices should direct their questions to their headquarters Insurance Officers.

The email Hotline may not be used by or on behalf of annuitants.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE 1997 OPEN SEASON

FEHB Guides

There will be no changes in the quantity of RI 70-1, the FEHB Guide used by most employees, for the 1997 open season. The same quantity that was printed for the 1996 open season -- an amount equal to 60% of an agency's population -- will be printed for this year's open season.

Audio Cassettes

OPM will not be involved in the ordering of audio cassette tapes for the visually impaired. Agencies must order these tapes directly from the open fee-for-service plans. We will include the list of plan contacts from whom you may order the tapes when we send you the BAL on ordering and distribution (sometime in late August).

OPM Web Site and OPM ONLINE

The 1998 FEHB Guide (RI 70-1), all health plan brochures, and the News Release announcing the 1998 rates will be uploaded to OPM's Web site < <http://www.opm.gov/insure> > and OPM ONLINE (202-606-4800). The FEHB Guide and each brochure will be available in PDF format for downloading and printing, as well as WordPerfect 5.1 suitable for the visually impaired.

In addition, the Web site will contain a version of the FEHB Guide designed specifically for the electronic environment. It will contain links from plans' names to the plans' brochures, in both formats. It will also contain links from the FEHB Guide and the brochures to plan Web sites for additional information about the plan, and links to other Web sites.



Abby L. Block, Chief
Insurance Policy and Information Division