



Benefits Administration Letter

Number: 03-404

Date: October 27, 2003

Subject: 2003 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program Open Season: Ordering and Distribution of Material

OVERVIEW

Open Season Materials

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) prepares open season materials for employees and other FEHB enrollees to use during the open season and throughout the year. The following materials will be available during the 2003 open season:

- **Plan brochures.** These brochures are the statements of benefits, exclusions, and limitations.
- **Materials for the visually impaired.**
- **SF 2809** (Health Benefits Election Form)

Shipping and Packing

The plan brochures will be packaged in groups of 25 and boxed at up to 250 items per container.

PLAN BROCHURES

All Plan brochures are available for downloading from the FEHB web site: www.opm.gov/insure. Please encourage your employees to use the web site as their primary resource.

How Do We Get Fee-for-Service Plan Brochures?

Fee-for-service plans will ship a supply of their brochures to each of your designated distribution points.

How Do We Get Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) Plan Brochures?

You must order HMO brochures directly from the plans. We will provide you with a list of plan contacts for this purpose in an upcoming BAL. The personnel official designated for each agency installation must determine the number of employees working at or serviced by the installation that are eligible to enroll in each HMO, i.e., the number of employees located in the plan's service area. The installation

must then contact each plan in its area and provide the plan with the following:

- An estimate number of eligible employees. (Be sure to include Spouse Equity and TCC enrollees in this estimate).
- The address to which the plan should ship the brochures.

The plan will then ship a supply of brochures directly to the installation.

How Do We Get Brochures for Plans with a Point of Service Product?

Fee-for-service plans with a point of service product will ship a supply of their brochures to each of your designated distribution points.

For HMOs with a point of service product, you must order plan brochures directly from the plans as described above.

How Many Brochures Do We Get?

Fee-for-service plans will get a distribution list that shows the quantity they are to ship to each distribution point (generally 15% of the eligible FEHB population).

Agencies order HMO (and HMO point of service) brochures directly from the plans. The plans will compute a quantity equal to 15% of the number of eligible employees and will send that number to each agency.

What Should We Do With Them?

Each employee currently enrolled will receive a brochure directly from his/her plan. You must keep a supply of brochures on hand for reference and for distribution to employees who decide to enroll or change plans. These brochures must be readily accessible to employees.

Maintain close control over issuing plan brochures. Employees should be allowed to take copies home for review. If an employee enrolls or changes health plans, he/she should keep the brochure for that plan. The employee must promptly return other brochures to the personnel office.

You must give your Spouse Equity and TCC enrollees the same access to brochures as employees. Tell your Spouse Equity and TCC enrollees how to obtain brochures and SF 2809 enrollment forms if they are interested in changing plans. The employing office maintaining the enrollment should tell the individual to call the plan at the telephone number listed in the FEHB Guide if they cannot fill a request for a brochure, (e.g., if the enrollee lives in an area not served by the plans for which the employing office has brochures).

How Do We Order More Brochures?

You must request additional brochures directly from the plans.

MATERIAL FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

What Is Available?

- **2004 fee-for-service plan cassette tapes for visually impaired employees.** These are tone-indexed cassette tapes of the brochures for the open fee-for-service plans. Each plan brochure is available on the FEHB web site in electronic formats suitable for the visually impaired.

How Do We Get Cassette Tapes?

You must order cassette tapes directly from the open fee-for-service plans. A list of plan contacts to use for ordering the tapes is attached.

Agency Responsibilities

All Federal agencies at the headquarters and installation levels must take steps to seek out visually impaired employees and to let them know that the cassette tapes and the FEHB web site are available. **All of the information in each health plan brochure is also available in electronic formats accessible to the visually impaired on the web site. Please encourage your employees to visit the web site at www.opm.gov/insure.**

SF 2809 (HEALTH BENEFITS ELECTION FORM)

Ordering SF 2809

You must order the SF 2809 from General Services Administration (GSA) supply centers just as you order any other OPM-issued Standard Forms using the normal FEDSTRIP/MILSTRIP procedures. Contact your purchasing or acquisitions office for your agency's procedures. The SF 2809 should also be available from GSA Customer Service Centers. The SF 2809 is **not** available from OPM; however, it is available on our web site at www.opm.gov/insure/health/sf2809.htm.

If your employees have access to Employee Express to make open season changes, you should keep this in mind when determining how large a supply of the SF 2809 you need to order.

What Should We Do With The Form?

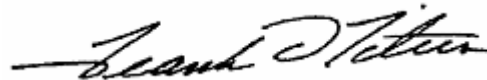
You must keep sufficient quantities of the SF 2809 available to handle employee requests, both during open season and throughout the year. You must give the form to employees, Spouse Equity, and TCC enrollees who are enrolled in plans that will not be participating in the FEHB Program in 2004.

PREMIUMS

OPM announces premium changes each year in a news release. Agency payroll offices, however, must not use these rates to update their payroll systems. OPM's Center for Financial Services will issue a Benefits Administration Letter (BAL) giving the official enrollee withholding rates and Government contribution rates and other information relevant to payroll offices. The BAL will also provide agencies with information on obtaining a PC-compatible floppy disk containing the 2004 FEHB rates.

We encourage you and your employees to visit the web site at www.opm.gov/insure. The web site will be updated regularly with current information including new plan terminations and more.

Sincerely,



Frank D. Titus
Assistant Director
for Insurance Services

Attachment

PLAN CONTACTS FOR ORDERING AUDIO CASSETTE TAPES

PLAN	CONTACT	PHONE	FAX
APWU	Ken Perlberg	(301) 622-5731	(301) 622-5712
BCBS	Paula Spurway	(202) 942-1274	(202) 942-1263
GEHA	Lisa McDonald	(816) 257-3334	(816) 257-3333
Mail Handlers	Gloria Gedrich	(301) 517-2032	(301) 517-2127
NALC	Cal Engle	(703) 729-8101	(703) 729-8109
PBP Health Plan	Brenda Tanner	(703) 548-5922	(703) 836-8937