
FEHB Program Carrier Letter

All Carriers

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Insurance Programs

Letter No. 2002-23

Date: July 12, 2002

Fee-for-service [20] Experience-rated HMO [20] Community-rated HMO [20]

SUBJECT: Placement of ID Numbers in CLER

We want to give you some guidance on where to place certain enrollee data elements when you input your quarterly enrollment data to the FEHB Enrollment Reconciliation Clearinghouse, also known as CLER. Please make sure the enrollment data you submit to CLER in September 2002 conforms to the instructions in this carrier letter. Following these instructions will help us eliminate unnecessary discrepancies.

EMPLOYEES

You will have the name and only one ID number, the Social Security Number (SSN), to input for many of your FEHB enrollees. List this number in the “**Enrollee_SSN**” field. This field is item number 2 on page 8 of the CLER Carrier Enrollment File Layout. The File Layout may be found at <http://sig.nfc.usda.gov/cler/requirements>.

ANNUITANTS

For the retirees and survivor annuitants under payroll office numbers 24900002 (annuitants administered by OPM) and 24900003 (direct pay annuitants administered by NFC), there will be multiple ID numbers to input. [Remember that you must discontinue using payroll office number 24000002, that we formerly used for OPM annuitants. See FEHB Carrier Letter 2002-20.]

You will have the following numbers:

- The annuitant’s SSN;
- The Retirement Claim Number, either CSA for annuitants (CSA plus 8 digits), or CSF for survivor annuitants (CSF plus 8 digits); and
- In the case of a survivor annuitant, the survivor annuitant’s SSN.

Enter the CSA or CSF number in the “**Other_Payroll_Office_Enrollee_ID**” field. This field is item number 11 on page 9 of the CLER Carrier Enrollment File Layout. Input the appropriate “A” or “F” followed by an 8-digit number. The 8th digit is a suffix that is used to distinguish annuitants using the same Retirement Claim Number. For CSA numbers, a suffix of zero indicates the person is the annuitant, and a suffix of 3 or 4 indicates a former spouse. For CSF numbers, a suffix of W indicates the person is the survivor annuitant, a suffix of S or Z indicates a former spouse, and a suffix of A through E, or U, indicates a surviving child. Because more than one family member may be using the same 7-digit claim number, using the 8th digit suffix is important to avoid discrepancies because multiple annuitants are using the same claim number.

You may obtain an annuitant's or survivor annuitant's claim number by accessing the Carrier Information System (1-478-757-3164) that OPM's Office of Retirement Programs operates. We gave you a Plan Identification Number (PIN) to access this system. Your OPM Contract Specialist can tell you your PIN. **It is important that you obtain, store and report the Retirement Claim number for annuitants.**

Survivor annuitants. Enter the survivor's SSN in the "Enrollee_SSN" field and the deceased annuitant's SSN, if you have it, in the "Annuitant_Or_Survivor_SSN" field. This field is item number 9 on page 9 of the CLER Carrier Enrollment File Layout.

COMPENSATIONERS

Put the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs' (OWCP) claim number in the same field as OPM's Retirement Claim Number, the "Other_Payroll_Office_ID" field. The OWCP claim number is a 10-character, numeric field formatted as two digits followed by a dash followed by seven digits. However, do not use a dash when entering this number into CLER. Enter the OWCP claim number in the "Other_Payroll_Office_ID" field as a nine-digit numeric entry with no dashes. The number should be left justified with trailing spaces. The OWCP claim number used to begin with the letter "A". OWCP no longer uses these old numbers. Do not report an obsolete OWCP claim number to CLER.

If you have FEHB enrollees in any of the following payroll office numbers, obtain and report the individuals' OWCP Claim Number:

| | | | |
|------------|-----------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| 16-00-9907 | Washington D.C. | 16-00-9918 | Seattle |
| 16-00-9909 | San Francisco | 16-00-9919 | National Office (also in D.C.) |
| 16-00-9910 | Chicago | 16-00-9920 | Kansas City |
| 16-00-9911 | Boston | 16-00-9921 | Denver |
| 16-00-9912 | New York | 16-00-9922 | Philadelphia |
| 16-00-9915 | Cleveland | 16-00-9923 | Dallas |
| 16-00-9916 | Jacksonville | | |

If you do not have a compensation enrollee's OWCP claim number, obtain it directly from the enrollee, as OWCP does not maintain a national data bank of claim numbers and neither OWCP nor we can give you the number.

ENROLLEES NOT WANTING TO DISCLOSE THEIR SSN

Occasionally employees and annuitants will not want us to send you their SSNs. They are perfectly within their rights to ask not to disclose their SSNs. When they do, coordinate with the individual's employing office or retirement system and decide on a pseudo SSN. It may be that you already have their actual SSN even though they wish you not to use it. (If that is the case, follow the instructions in the next paragraph.)

Where you put the pseudo SSN in your CLER input data depends on which SSNs you have.

- If you have only one SSN, please enter it in the “**Enrollee_SSN**” field and leave the “**Pseudo_SSN**” field blank. (The pseudo SSN field is item number 10 on page 9 of the CLER Carrier Enrollment File Layout.) Put the one number you have in the “**Enrollee_SSN**” field even if you are not sure whether the number is the individual’s actual or pseudo SSN.
- If you have both the enrollee’s actual SSN and a pseudo SSN, enter the pseudo SSN in the “**Enrollee_SSN**” field and leave the “**Pseudo_SSN**” field blank. **DO NOT USE THE INDIVIDUAL’S ACTUAL SSN.**

For simplicity and uniformity, we have decided not to use the “**Pseudo_SSN**” field and utilize only the “**Enrollee_SSN**” field whether you enter the actual SSN or pseudo SSN. **NOTE:** This instruction is different from the instructions given on the CLER Input File Layout document. The number of people who will want to use a pseudo SSN is tiny, but they are very adamant about your not using it. Make every effort not to use the actual SSN for individuals that express their desire not to have you use their SSN.

OBTAINING ASSISTANCE

For technical assistance on your input data, contact NFC’s CLER Operations Unit via email at nfc.cler@usda.gov or by calling 504-255-3270.

ORP’S RECONCILIATION LIST

Because of the large size and complexity of the data for OPM’s annuitant population, ORP will continue to send you their quarterly reconciliation report directly, just as they have been doing, until such time as we have more experience in using CLER. Use ORP’s reports to check the discrepancies reported by CLER. We will not tolerate any inappropriate terminations of enrollments of our annuitants, as we mentioned in carrier letter 2002-20.

CONTACT INFORMATION IN CLER

When developing CLER, NFC collected the data on carrier and agency contact persons. This contact information is available to you in the CLER web site. Now that CLER is operational, you, rather than NFC, must maintain current and accurate information for your contact person on the CLER web site.

TRAINING

NFC has now completed its schedule of training on using the CLER system. NFC has offered, however, to conduct additional training sessions this summer on an as needed basis. For training information, contact NFC by calling NFC's CLER Customer Support Staff at 504-255-5230 or contact them via email at Customer.Support@usda.gov.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Eric Figg at 202-606-4083 or through email at edfigg@opm.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Abby L. Block". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Abby L. Block
Assistant Director
for Insurance Programs