



***Retirement and Insurance Service  
Benefits Administration Letter***

Number: 01-408

Date: December 6, 2001

**Subject: 2001 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program Open Season:  
Belated Open Season Enrollments Due to Mail Delays**

In response to the discovery of anthrax in mail delivered in Florida, New Jersey, New York, and Washington DC, the United States Postal Service took measures to ensure the safety of their employees as well as their customers by embargoing, screening, sanitizing, etc. the mail in these areas. These safety measures have disrupted the delivery of mail service and created delays in receipt of the mail in these areas as well as other parts of the country. These mail delays might impact the receipt of employees' open season enrollment change requests by their human resource offices.

In BAL 01-406, *2001 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program Open Season: Conducting the Open Season*, dated November 1, 2001, we gave instructions on accepting belated registrations. We informed you that you have the authority to accept late registrations if you determine that an employee was unable to submit a SF 2809 on time due to circumstances beyond the employee's control. Normally, we encourage you to make limited use of this authority but we recommended that you take a liberal view in cases where an employee's plan is terminating its FEHB participation. We also recommend that you consider mail delay as an example of a situation where you can be flexible when accepting a late open season enrollment change request.

As a reminder of the procedures for processing belated open season actions, we have included instructions from BAL 01-406.

***Processing a belated open season action*** - If you decide to accept an employee's late registration, write "Belated open season enrollment/change" in the "Remarks" section of the SF 2809. You must attach to copy 1 of the SF 2809 the employee's statement explaining why they could not register on time, or add your own note if the reason was an agency problem.

*Civil Service  
Retirement  
System*

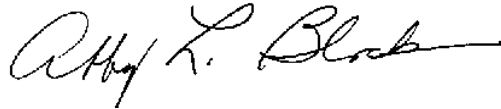
*Federal Employees'  
Group Life  
Insurance Program*

*Federal Employees  
Health Benefits  
Program*

*Federal Employees  
Retirement  
System*

*Federal Long  
Term Care  
Insurance  
Program*

***Effective date of a belated open season action*** - Effective retroactive to the first day of the first pay period, which begins on or after January 1, 2002. This effective date is the same as that of an open season change filed on time. If the belated change is from not enrolled to enrolled, the requirement of having been in pay status during the preceding pay period must also be met.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Abby L. Block". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Abby L. Block  
Assistant Director  
for Insurance Programs