

**Office of
Personnel Management**
The Federal Government's Human Resources Agency



Tribal Benefits Administration Letter

Number: 17-704

Date: October 17, 2017

**Subject: 2017 FEHB Open Season for Tribal Employees: FEHB Program
Significant Plan Changes**

This Tribal Benefits Administration Letter (TBAL) is the fourth in our series of 2017 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season for Tribal Employees TBALs. This TBAL provides information on significant plan changes for the FEHB Program for 2018. This year's Open Season for Tribal Employees will run from Monday, November 13, through Monday, December 11, 2017.

This TBAL provides important information on the significant changes affecting certain plans in the FEHB Program for the upcoming Open Season. The **first attachment** to this TBAL identifies the plans and their corresponding significant changes. Some of these events will require action on the part of tribal employers and tribal employees.

Please note there are plans leaving the FEHB Program at the end of 2017 or reducing their service areas and terminating their enrollment codes. Since tribal employees in these terminating plans and service area reductions **must** enroll in a new plan during Open Season or they will be enrolled in the Standard Option of the GEHA Benefit Plan (the lowest-cost nationwide plan option for 2018 as determined by OPM), please distribute this list to your tribal employees. It is your responsibility to monitor tribal employees who are covered by these terminating plans or service area reductions and follow up with those who have not submitted an enrollment change before the end of Open Season. Again, enrollees in the terminating plans and enrollment codes who do not change their health plan by enrolling in another FEHB plan during Open Season will be enrolled in the Standard Option of the GEHA Benefit Plan (the lowest-cost nationwide plan option for 2018 as determined by OPM).

TIP: Distribute the attached list of significant FEHB plan changes to all tribal employees so they can check to see if their plan or service area will continue to participate in the FEHB Program in 2018.

Table 1: Plans Leaving the FEHB Program

Table 2: FEHB Plan Reducing Service Areas and Terminating Enrollment Codes

What Must Tribal Employees Do?

- Tribal employees in terminating plans (**Table 1**) or service area reductions with terminating enrollment codes (**Table 2**) **must** enroll in a new health plan during Open Season if they want coverage. If they do not enroll in a new FEHB plan, they will be enrolled in the Standard Option of the GEHA Benefit Plan (the lowest-cost nationwide plan option for 2018 as determined by OPM).
- **New Coverage:** Coverage under an FEHB enrollee's new health plan will be effective beginning January 1, 2018. FEHB enrollees will remain covered and receive the 2017 benefits of the old plan until coverage under the new plan becomes effective.

What Must You Do?

- You must notify tribal employees enrolled in the plans listed in **Tables 1 and 2** to select new plans. Advise your tribal employees if they do not choose new FEHB plans, they will be enrolled in the Standard Option of the GEHA Benefit Plan (the lowest-cost nationwide plan option for 2018 as determined by OPM).
- Distribute copies of this list to tribal employees with your tribal employer's notice about Open Season along with copies of the **second attachment**, *FastFacts: What to do When Your Health Plan is Terminating Coverage in Your Area or Leaving the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program*.
- Follow up with employees in these plans and remind them to select new plans.
- **Belated changes:** Some tribal employees still might not receive instructions to change plans during Open Season. We encourage you to be liberal in accepting belated Open Season changes from tribal employees enrolled in terminating plans or plans with service area reductions and terminating enrollment codes.

What Will Health Plans Do?

Plan Notification: The plans in **Tables 1 and 2** have been instructed to notify FEHB enrollees of the need to select new FEHB plans for 2018; however, because some plans' enrollment and address lists may not be up-to-date, we encourage you to accept belated changes.

Table 3: FEHB Plans Reducing Service Areas without Terminating Enrollment Codes

What Must Tribal Employees Do?

Tribal employees in the service areas being terminated should elect a new FEHB health plan for 2018; however, tribal employees who do not choose a new FEHB health plan will only have emergency services where they live and will have to travel to their plan's remaining service area to receive full benefits.

What Must You Do?

- You must notify tribal employees enrolled in the plans listed in **Table 3** to select a new FEHB plan. Advise your tribal employees if they do not choose a new

FEHB plan, they will only have emergency services where they live and they will have to travel to their plan's remaining service area to receive full benefits in 2018.

- Distribute copies of this list to employees with your tribal employer's notice about Open Season along with copies of the **second attachment**, *FastFacts: What to do When Your Health Plan is Terminating Coverage in Your Area or Leaving the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program*.
- Follow up with tribal employees in these plans and remind them to select a new FEHB plan.
- **Belated changes:** Some tribal employees still might not receive instructions to change plans during Open Season. We encourage you to be liberal in accepting belated Open Season changes from employees enrolled in the plan reducing its service area.

What Will Health Plans Do?

Plan Notification: The plans in **Table 3** have been instructed to notify FEHB enrollees that their respective service areas are being terminated. If FEHB enrollees do not choose another FEHB health plan, the enrollees will only have emergency services where they live and they will have to travel to their plan's remaining service area to receive full benefits in 2018. However, because a plan's enrollment and address lists may not be up-to-date, we encourage you to accept belated changes.

Table 4: FEHB Plan Terminating Option and Enrollment Codes

What Must Employees Do?

- Tribal employees in the plan dropping an option (**Table 4**) may choose a new health plan during Open Season or remain with their current plan and be switched automatically into the plan's option specified in **Table 4**.
- **New Coverage:** Coverage under an enrollee's new health plan or option will be effective January 1, 2018.

What Must You Do?

- Advise your tribal employees who are enrolled in the plan that is dropping an option (**Table 4**) that if they do not choose a new health plan, they will be automatically transferred into the plan's option as specified in **Table 4**.
- Distribute copies of this list to tribal employees with your tribal employer's notice about Open Season.
- Follow up with tribal employees in the plan and remind them that if they do not choose a new health plan, they will be automatically transferred into the plan's option specified in **Table 4**.
- **Belated changes:** Some tribal employees still might not receive instructions regarding their plan dropping an option. We encourage you to be liberal in accepting belated Open Season changes from tribal employees enrolled in the plan dropping an option listed in **Table 4**.

What Will the Health Plan Do?

- **Plan Notification:** The plan in **Table 4** has been instructed to notify enrollees that their current plan option is being discontinued and that if they do not change to another plan during Open Season, they will be switched automatically into the plan's option specified in **Table 4**.

Table 5: Plans Adding New Options And Enrollment Codes

Table 6: Service Area Expansions Without New Enrollment Codes

Table 7: Service Area Expansions Adding New Enrollment Codes

Table 8 Plan Name Changes

Table 9 New Plan Entering the FEHB Program

What Must You Do?

You must include the plans with new options, the plans with expanded service areas, the plan with name changes, and the new plan entering the FEHB Program (Tables 5-9) when you count the number of eligible tribal employees and place your order for brochures.

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS AND COVERAGE - REMINDER

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, FEHB plans have been providing a summary document on their websites which details information about health plan benefits and coverage. The summary document is also available on our website at www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information/summary-of-benefits.

In order to help FEHB enrollees better understand their coverage and allow them to easily compare different plans and plan options, the Summary of Benefits and Coverage (SBC) document includes information on the following:

- Cost - deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, and out-of-pocket limits
- Coverage - covered services, examples of covered services and excluded services
- Rights - rights to continue coverage as well as grievance and appeal rights
- A statement that coverage under the plan qualifies as “minimum essential coverage”
- A statement that the health coverage of the plan does meet the minimum value standard for the benefits the plan provides

The SBC will continue to have a disclaimer indicating that the plan brochure remains the official statement of benefits.

Plans will continue to provide information in their Open Season materials to their

enrollees about where to find their SBC on their website as well as how to obtain a paper copy of the SBC. The plans may also have their SBC available at health fairs.

Conclusion

Again, this year's FEHB Open Season for Tribal Employees will run from Monday, November 13 through Monday, December 11, 2017.

We encourage you and your tribal employees to visit our website at www.opm.gov/tribalprograms for the most up-to-date information. Please note that 2018 Plan information will be posted on our website by the first week of November.

We look forward to working with you to ensure tribal employees have a successful Open Season.

Sincerely,

Alan P. Spielman
Director
Healthcare and Insurance

Attachments