



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

**Benefits Administration Letter**

Number: 98-408

Date: August 6, 1998

**Subject: 1998 Federal Employees Health Benefits Program Open Season - Introduction**

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**DATES**

The 1998 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program open season will be held from November 9 through December 14, 1998.

**BALs**

As we proceed with our preparations for the 1998 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 1999, suggested open season notices for your employees, and other useful information that will enable you to conduct a successful open season at your agency.

**FEHB GUIDES**

As announced in BAL 98-407, there will be a change in the quantity of RI 70-1, the FEHB Guide used by most employees, and RI 70-8, the FEHB Guide used by most temporary employees, for the 1998 open season. An amount equal to 50% of an agency's population will be shipped, instead of 60%.

The RI 70-4, previously used for retirees in retirement systems other than CERS/FERS, has been eliminated and merged into the RI 70-9, which was previously used only for CERS/FERS retirees. This affects only a very small number of agencies.

**AUDIO CASSETTES**

OPM will not be involved in the ordering of brochure 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.

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*Civil Service  
Retirement  
System*

*Federal Employees  
Group Life  
Insurance*

*Federal Employees  
Health Benefits  
Program*

*Federal Employees  
Retirement  
System*

## EMAIL HOTLINE

Our Internet 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](mailto:hotline@opm.gov). Be sure to include your phone number in case we need to call you.

The email hotline is intended for the use of agency **headquarters Insurance Officers only**. Personnel offices should direct their questions to their headquarters Insurance Officers, and employees should direct their questions to their personnel offices. Employees may also obtain information about the FEHB open season by visiting the FEHB web site described below. In addition, they may contact us by email through the Feedback feature on the web site, or at [fehb@opm.gov](mailto:fehb@opm.gov).

## OPM WEB SITE

This year, all 1999 FEHB Guides, all health plan brochures, and the News Release announcing the 1999 premium rates will be available from OPM's web site (<http://www.opm.gov/insure/health>). The Guides and brochures will be available in PDF format for downloading and printing, as well as a text version 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 the plans' names to the plans' brochures in both PDF and text formats. It will also contain links from the FEHB Guides and the brochures to plan web sites for additional information about the plans, as well as links to other related web sites.

The web site will also offer information about the new Patient Bill of Rights.



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