
FEHB Program Carrier Letter

All Carriers

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

Letter No. 2001-40

Date: November 29, 2001

Fee-for-service [35] Experience-rated HMO [38] Community-rated HMO [37]

SUBJECT: Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB): Suspension of FEHB Coverage to use TRICARE

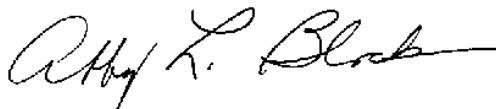
This letter is to notify you that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) published an interim regulation in the Federal Register on September 26, 2001, (66 FR 49086) that will allow FEHB annuitants, survivors, and former spouses (who have coverage under the spouse equity provisions of FEHB law) to suspend their FEHB coverage to use the TRICARE program. The regulation also allows these individuals to reenroll in the FEHB Program immediately if they involuntarily lose their TRICARE coverage, or during the annual FEHB open season. The regulation and a set of questions and answers can be viewed on our web site at www.opm.gov/insure.

OPM's Office of Retirement Programs (ORP) will process most annuitant, survivor, and former spouse requests for suspension of coverage and reenrollment. Other retirement systems (including the Office of Workers' Compensation (OWCP)) will process suspensions and reenrollments for their annuitants (including compensationers), survivors, and former spouses. Agency personnel offices will process suspensions and reenrollments for former spouses they are responsible for.

Attached is a Benefits Administration Letter (BAL) that we sent to Federal retirement systems and agencies to notify them of the new regulation and ask them to develop procedures to implement the new regulation. The BAL explains how OPM will implement the regulations for annuitants and survivors. Please familiarize yourself with these procedures so that suspensions and reenrollments can be processed as smoothly as possible. Since our enrollees can designate the effective date of their FEHB suspension, you will occasionally see middle of the month effective dates. Please accept these as correct dates.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Mike Kaszynski at 202-606-0004 or through email at mwkaszyn@opm.gov.

Sincerely,



Abby L. Block
Assistant Director
for Insurance Programs

Attachment