



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

MSG 2000-026

MEMORANDUM FOR: Heads Of Executive Departments And Agencies

FROM: Frank D. Titus Assistant Director for Insurance Programs

Subject: Federal Employees Health Benefits Guide

Dear Federal Agency Personnel Director:

Typically only ten percent of Federal employees consider changing health plans during the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season; less than five percent actually make a change. Yet, in 1999 we printed and distributed enough Guides for 50% of Federal employees -- over 2.5 million copies at a program cost in excess of \$1M. We believe we can make more effective use of these resources and still provide important information to Federal employees when and where they need it.

Employees and annuitants have been accessing Open Season material, including the Federal Employees Health Benefits Guides, via the Internet in increasing numbers for several years. A survey we conducted two years ago indicated that about 70% of Federal employees had Internet access either at work or at home. Research indicates that number has increased. During the last Open Season, the FEHB Website had more users than ever -- over 2 million hits. Many FEHB enrollees now tell us they rely totally on electronic information when making Open Season decisions.

While we believe we will always produce some volume of printed materials, it is apparent that our customers are looking for, and using, information electronically. Because of that, for the upcoming FEHB Open Season, we will concentrate even more effort on the development of web-based information. We would plan to reduce the number of Guides we produce from 50% to 25% of your population. We believe we can do this without adversely affecting the availability of information employees need to make decisions. However, we also understand that some of you require wider distribution of printed material. In those cases, we will work with you to make additional printed copies available.

In addition, we are considering incorporating much of the standard program information from the FEHB Guide, along with some of the information from the old SF 2809-A, FEHB Information for Federal Civilian Employees and U.S. Postal Service Employees, into a new FEHB pamphlet. This would enable us to shorten the FEHB Guide. The new pamphlet would be available electronically, as well as from the Government Printing Office. We would appreciate your comments about information you believe we should include in this new publication. Please send any ideas or comments to Mr. Eric Figg (202-606-0745, fax 202-606-0036, email

edfigg@opm.gov), Insurance Planning and Evaluation Division, Office of Insurance Programs. Eric is also the person to contact if you believe you require Open Season Guides in excess of 25% of your employee population. Please contact him no later than April 14, 2000.

Sincerely,

Frank D. Titus
Assistant Director
for Insurance Programs