

OPM NEWS RELEASE

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FEDERAL EMPLOYEES GIVE HIGH MARKS TO THEIR PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFITS UNDER THE FEHB

Washington, D.C. -- An overwhelming percentage of users of the five largest managed fee-for-service plans in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) prescription drug benefit program expressed satisfaction with the prescription drug service. The survey is designed to gauge the quality of prescription drug service for participants in the program.

U.S. Office of Personnel Management Director Jim King, in announcing the results, said, "OPM is committed to maintaining quality service and access to health care, while containing costs. When enrollees take advantage of these incentives, significant discounts are achieved for the FEHB plan, and everyone benefits through lower premiums."

Most FEHB managed fee-for-service plans have prescription drug programs designed to attract customers and promote cost effective use of their prescription drug benefits. These activities are consistent with the practices of other large employers. To ensure that service quality remains high with these benefit innovations, OPM directed a study to compare customer satisfaction of services provided by retail pharmacy and mail order drug programs under five FEHB plans' prescription drug programs.

The Gallup Organization, under OPM's direction, surveyed 3,657 users of FEHB plans' prescription drug benefits from March through May of this year. The survey includes enrollees in five managed fee-for-service plans: Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan, Mail Handlers Benefit Plan, Government Employees Health Association Benefit Plan, National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Benefit Plan, and American Postal Workers Union Health Plan. These five FEHB plans' enrollees represent about 67 percent of the total FEHB population.

The telephone survey results show that a large majority of the surveyed prescription drug benefit users rated their most recent experience as excellent, very good, or good. There was no significant difference in the level of satisfaction between retail and mail order service. Of the 2,602 enrollees who had used a retail pharmacy benefit, 94 percent of them were satisfied with their most recent experience. Similarly, of the 2,199 enrollees who had used a mail-order benefit,

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94 percent were satisfied with their most recent experience. Some enrollees had used both benefits. Other survey results indicate there are no significant differences in the levels of satisfaction between the two methods when comparing enrollees by Medicare-coverage status, by gender, age or income.

The FEHB Program provides medical benefits to almost ten million federal employees, retirees and their dependents. Each year an "open season" is held to give enrollees the opportunity to elect coverage in the program or to change health plan options.

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