



***Retirement and Insurance Service
Benefits Administration Letter***

Number: 01-401

Date: August 1, 2001

**Subject: 2001 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program Open Season:
Introduction**

DATES

The 2001 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season will be held from November 12, 2001 through December 10, 2001.

BALs

As we proceed with our preparation for the 2001 Open Season, we will issue a series of Benefits Administration Letters (BAL) to give you information about ordering open season materials, significant FEHB plan changes for 2002, suggested open season notices for your employees, and other useful information that will enable you to conduct a successful open season at your agency.

AUDIO CASSETTES

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will not be involved in the ordering of brochure audiocassette tapes for the visually impaired. Agencies must order these tapes directly from the open season fee-for-service plans. We will include a list of plan contacts from whom you may order the tapes when we send you the BAL on ordering and distribution.

OPM WEB SITE

All 2002 FEHB Guides, health plan brochures, and the news release announcing the 2002 premium rates will be available on the OPM web site at www.opm.gov/insure/health. The Guides and brochures will be available in PDF format for downloading and printing, as well as text version suitable for the visually impaired.

<i>Civil Service Retirement System</i>	<i>Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program</i>	<i>Federal Employees Health Benefits Program</i>	<i>Federal Employees Retirement System</i>	<i>Long Term Care Insurance Program</i>
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Our 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. In addition, the web site will also contain versions of the plan brochures designed for easy navigation.

WEB DECISION TOOLS

OPM will not feature a link to a health insurance decision-making tool on the 2001 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) open season web site during the 2001 open season.

Since 1999, we have provided a link from the FEHB open season web site to a decision tool. This tool was available to Federal employees, annuitants and their families to help with FEHB open season enrollment decisions. We recently became aware that there are other web-based tools in addition to the tool we have featured in the past. In fact, several vendors have demonstrated their products to us. While their approaches to the decision-making process are different in several ways, we concluded that each could be helpful to Federal employees/annuitants in selecting a plan that best meets their needs.

We have advised companies and individuals with a web-based tool to contact individual Federal agencies about making their product available to Federal employees. Agencies can then decide which tool would best meet the needs of their employees. OPM's Office of Insurance Programs will work with qualified vendors to provide them with the FEHB data necessary to populate a decision tool. The data is generally available on the OPM web site no later than November 1. If necessary, however, we can provide the data earlier.

CONTACTING US

Our Internet email 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 fehbm@opm.gov.



Abby L. Block
Assistant Director
for Insurance Programs