The HR Advisor

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DoDEA
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Travel and Overseas Allowances for Dependent Parents

Parents of the employee or employee's spouse may be considered dependents for permanent duty travel eligibility if they are residing as members of the employee's household when the employee reports for duty at the new duty station or performs authorized renewal agreement or separation travel. In addition, the parent must receive 51 percent of their support from the employee or employee's spouse. They may also be considered dependents if they are members of the employee's household and, in addition to their own income, receive support (less than 51 percent) from the employee or employee's spouse without which they would be unable to maintain a reasonable standard of living. For overseas allowances, parents of the employee or employee's spouse must be residing with the employee at his/her overseas post and be at least 51 percent dependent on the employee for support. For purposes of travel and overseas allowances, the dependency criteria for a parent are not based on medical needs of the parent. Rather it is based on monetary support and the fact that the parent resides with the employee as a member of the employee's household.

An employee's request to establish a parent as a dependent for travel and allowances must be accompanied by documentation to support the relationship; and documentation to support the residence of the parent. In addition, a separate signed statement is required from the employee outlining the parent's annual income from all sources; the parent's annual personal and household expenses and what portion of those expenses are paid by the employee.

Did You Know

Congress designated each October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This effort to educate the American public about issues related to disability and employment actually began in 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to "National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

"Placing one foot in front of the other, I've climbed to higher lengths. Reaching beyond my own limitations, to show my inner strength. No obstacle too hard, for this warrior to overcome. I'm just a man on a mission, to prove my disability hasn't won."

Robert M. Hensel

Talent Has No Boundaries

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE ALLOWANCE

The Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) and the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), Volume 2, authorizes a miscellaneous expense allowance (MEA) to reimburse various costs in connection with a permanent change of station residence relocation. Section 240 of the DSSR authorizes MEA for new appointees performing first duty station travel to a foreign post. Chapter 5, Part G, of the JTR authorizes reimbursement for MEA for employees transferring on permanent change of station (PCS) or Temporary Change of Station (TCS) travel. The MEA for employees transferring are claimed on the "Travel Voucher or Subvoucher", DD Form 1351-2. Reimbursement for MEA for new appointees on first duty station travel to a foreign post are claimed on the "Foreign Allowances Application, Grant and Report", SF-1190.

Employees may elect to claim a flat amount at the current rate of either $500 (without dependents) or $1,000 (with dependents) for allowable miscellaneous expenses without receipts or itemized statements. The authorizing official may approve a higher amount in excess of the flat rate if the claim is supported by evidence of expenses incurred and the total amount does not exceed: (1) one week's salary if the employee is without dependents or one week's salary for an employee at GS-13, step 10, whichever is the lesser amount, or (2) two weeks' salary if the employee is with dependents or two weeks' salary for an employee at GS-13, step 10, whichever is the lesser amount. Examples of reimbursable costs include: disconnecting/connecting appliances, equipment and utilities involved in relocation, and converting appliances for operation on available utilities (this does not include purchasing appliances or equipment in lieu of conversion); cutting and fitting rugs, draperies and curtains moved from one residence to another; non-refundable utility fees/deposits; automobile registration and driver's license; shipment and/or required quarantine of pet (s); and rental agent's fee incurred for living quarters in a foreign area that are not offset by an eventual refund provided the fees were not authorized as an allowable living quarters allowance expense.

Emergency Contact Information

In the event of an emergency your supervisor may need to contact you or a person you have designated as your emergency point of contact. This information is vital to ensuring that you or your family is notified quickly with situational updates. Your information should be updated in MyBiz and submitted on either the form used by your organization or the DD Form 93, Record of Emergency Data. It is in your best interest to ensure that your supervisor has current information regarding any special health considerations you may have. This information may be crucial in the event you should become ill at work and require medical assistance. Please remember to update MyBiz regularly as this information changes. Additionally, It is very important that you provide your family or emergency contact with your work contact information, i.e., your supervisor or co-worker's name and phone number.

For more assistance on new user registration or how to navigate MyBiz and MyWorkplace after registration, go to: http://www.dodea.edu/offices/hr/news/documents/CACRegistrationforMyBizUsers.pdf.

Federal Benefits Open Season is Coming!

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has announced that this year's open season for health benefits, dental and vision insurance, and Flexible Spending Accounts will run from November 8 through December 13, 2010. The open season will give federal employees and retirees the opportunity to change their health-care coverage and employees who are not enrolled, but are eligible to participate, the opportunity to elect coverage.

Premiums for the 2011 FEHB Program will rise by an average 7.2 percent for the enrollee share of premiums. Find a list of the premiums for 2011 on OPM's website at http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/rates/index.asp.

Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Program

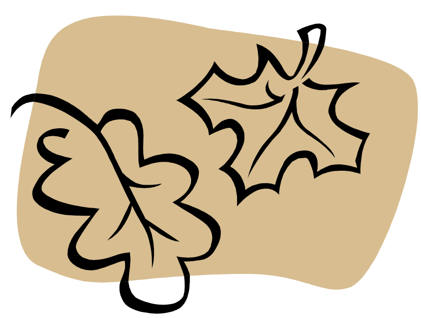
Employees are reminded you must make a positive election each year for the Flexible Spending Accounts Program. **Enrollment does not carry over from year to year**. **The Affordable Care Act (ACA)** also resulted in changes to the FSA Program. Beginning January 1, 2011, currently eligible over-the-counter (OTC) products that are medicines or drugs (e.g., acne treatments, allergy and cold medicines, antacids, etc.) will not be eligible for reimbursement from a Health Care FSA, unless the enrollee has a prescription for that item from a physician. The only exception is insulin; enrollees will not need a prescription. Enrollees will only be reimbursed for eligible OTC medicines and drugs purchased before January 1, 2011 and submitted on or before April 30, 2011. Other currently eligible OTC items that are not medicines or drugs will not require a prescription in 2011.

In addition, beginning January 1, 2011, an employee enrolled in FSAFEDS may request reimbursement for eligible health care expenses incurred by a natural child, stepchild, adopted child, eligible foster child, or a child who is placed with the employee for legal adoption. The child does not need to reside with the employee or qualify as the employee's tax dependent**.** Prior to January 1, 2011, eligible children are limited to those who you can claim as dependent(s) on your Federal Tax return. The ACA has also extended the age of a child who may incur eligible expenses under an employee's Health Care FSA. Expenses of an employee's child will be covered through the taxable year prior to the taxable year in which the child turns age 27. The ACA does not affect Dependent Care FSAs. More information is available at www.fsafeds.com.

Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP)

Employees may only cancel a FEDVIP enrollment during Open Season. If employees are enrolled and do nothing during open season enrollment continues. There is no requirement to enroll each year. **Note: ACA does not extend coverage for children until age 26 or provide coverage for married dependent children.** Children continue to be covered only until age 22 and dependency requirements must be met.

The Federal Benefits Open Season <u>does not</u> include the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI) nor did health care reform extend coverage beyond the age of 22*. For* more information contact your local servicing Human Resources Office.



Health Reform Changes for Federal Benefits Programs Become Effective January 1, 2011

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) extends important new benefits to FEHB enrollees and strengthens the program.

Beginning January 1, 2011**,** children may be covered under their parent's FEHB health plan's Self and Family enrollment until age 26. The changes also extend coverage under their parent's FEHB enrollment to children who are married, children who are not financially dependent on the parent, and stepchildren who do not live with the enrollee in a parent-child relationship. In addition, children who lose FEHB coverage due to reaching age 26 are eligible to continue coverage under the Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) provisions for up to 36 months, even if they previously had TCC. A child of an FEHB enrollee who is under age 26 and currently enrolled under TCC may no longer need TCC enrollment since that child can be covered under their parent's Self and Family enrollment.

What should employees do?

If you have a current Self and Family enrollment and you do not change to another health plan or option during Open Season, newly eligible children will be covered beginning January 1. Employees should contact their FEHB plan to provide information on the newly eligible child or children. Enrollees will receive information from their plan on how to contact the plan.

If you are not enrolled or have a current Self Only enrollment and you want coverage effective January 1, 2011 for your child or children. Employees should enroll or make an election change based on a Qualifying Life Event (QLE). A QLE change may be made from 31 days before to 60 days after January 1. The change will take effect on the first day of the pay period that includes January 1. This means the election will be effective **December 19, 2010**; however, the child or children will not have coverage until **January 1, 2011**.

Employees may also make an Open Season election. An Open Season change will take effect on the first day of the first pay period that begins in 2011. For DoDEA employees, this will be **January 2, 2011.**

For more detailed information about the changes and other benefit program changes as a result of the ACA, please see contact your local servicing Human Resources Office or go to the Office of Personnel Management Website at www.opm.gov. Also watch for email bulletins and announcement regarding upcoming changes and instructions on what you should do.