

United States Department of the Interior

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In Reply To:

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November 4, 2003

EMAIL TRANSMISSION - 11/05/03
Information Bulletin No. MT-2004-007

To: All Montana/Dakotas Employees
From: Deputy State Director, Division of Support Services
Subject: Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season

The FEHB open season is from November 10 through December 8, 2003. Your current health plan provider should send you its brochure, which includes 2004 rates as well as any plan changes. Current enrollments do not require further action to continue coverage.

During open season, any eligible employee who is not currently enrolled may enroll, and any eligible enrollee may change from one plan or option to another, from self only to self and family, or make a combination of these changes.

Open season also allows for waiving or electing pre-tax payment (premium conversion) of your FEHB premiums. **Enrollees participating in premium conversion may cancel coverage or change to self only during open season without the occurrence of a qualifying life event.** The premium conversion waiver/election form can be printed from the forms directory at <s:/forms/fehb.conversion.form.wpd> or is available from the Branch of Human Resources Management (MT-933).

Starting with this FEHB Open Season, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will no longer distribute the *Guide to FEHB Plans (Guide)*. The Guide and individual plan brochures are available on OPM's website at www.opm.gov/insure/health.

How to enroll or make enrollment changes during open season:

Employees who wish to enroll or make changes must either complete a Health Benefits Registration Form (SF-2809) with a **revision date of July 1999**, or make changes via Employee Express. All SF-2809 forms must be received in MT-933 by close of business December 8, 2003. Employee Express changes may be made through the website at www.employeeexpress.gov or by contacting Employee Express at one of the following numbers:

- From work: 1-912-757-3080
- From any touch-tone telephone: 1-800-827-6254
- Telephonic Device for Deaf (TDD) Service: 1-912-757-3117 or 1-888-880-0412

To utilize Employee Express, you will need your Personal Identification Number (PIN). To obtain a replacement PIN, you may call the OPM-Macon Help Desk at 912-757-3030. Your new PIN will be mailed to your official correspondence address on file. Employee Express transactions must also be completed by December 8, 2003.

Please note that information you provide by enrolling in the FEHB Program may also be used for computer matching with Federal, State, or local agencies' files to determine whether you qualify for benefits payments, or eligibility in the FEHB Program, Medicare, or other Government benefits programs.

Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC):

If you have FEHB coverage and leave Federal employment, you will generally be eligible for up to 18 months of TCC (unless you are separated for gross misconduct). Enrollment under TCC can continue for up to 36 months for dependents who lose eligibility as family members under your enrollment. This includes spouses who lose coverage because of divorce and children who lose coverage because they marry or reach age 22.

Enrollees under TCC must pay the total plan premium (without a Government contribution) plus a 2 percent administrative fee. There are specific timeframes within which you or your dependent must enroll in TCC. Contact MT-933 for more information.

Effective dates for new enrollments or changes to enrollments:

New enrollments and changes to current enrollments elected during open season will become effective January 11, 2004.

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Connie Raynock or Verlaine Van Atta, Human Resources Assistants, MT-933, at 406-896-5229/5233.

Signed by: Sandra L. Guches

Authenticated by: Donna K. Zentz, MT-933