
FEHB Program Carrier Letter

All Carriers

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Healthcare and Insurance

Letter No. 2011-01

Date: January 27, 2011

Fee-for-service [01] Experience-rated HMO [01] Community-rated HMO [01]

Subject: Survey and Administration of 2011 Plan Tobacco Cessation Benefits

The purpose of this letter is to collect detailed information from Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program carriers concerning each plan's administration of 2011 tobacco cessation benefits and to encourage plans to actively educate members and providers about this benefit. During the 2011 contract negotiations we required carrier's proposals to include coverage of tobacco cessation benefits. Specifically, we asked that plans cover up to four cessation counseling sessions per quit attempt and two quit attempts per year with no annual or lifetime limits. In addition, plans were to provide coverage for appropriate prescription and over-the-counter drugs approved by the FDA to treat tobacco dependence without copayments and not subject to annual deductibles or annual or life time dollar limits.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) plans to measure utilization and outcomes of the Program's expanded smoking cessation benefit. As a part of this effort, we are asking carriers to complete the attached report describing your plan's actions in the following areas:

1. Communication of benefits;
2. Identification of smokers;
3. Administration of benefits;
4. Tracking of utilization; and,
5. Payment of benefits.

Completion of Report

Attached are the forms you need to provide us by **February 28, 2011**.

To complete Attachment A, please check the appropriate box when requested. When required, please provide a concise narrative. You should submit your report information of the form provided.

To complete Attachment B provide a narrative concerning the plan's payment of benefits. You should submit your report information in Microsoft Word.

Please complete a report for each health plan offered. Don't forget to write your health plan's name and the two digit enrollment code applicable to the information on each attachment.

If you have any questions regarding your report, please contact Marguerite Martel, Senior Policy Analyst, Planning and Policy Analysis. Once completed, email your responses to Marguerite.Martel@opm.gov and provide a copy to your Contract Specialist.

Communication of Benefit

Studies show that barrier-free smoking cessation benefits are most effective when actively communicated to members. This includes repeatedly educating members using a variety of communication methods. We encourage plans to post information about the expanded smoking cessation benefit prominently on plan websites and include information about the benefit in plan newsletters, emails, and other methods the plan uses to communicate with members throughout the 2011 plan year. Website and newsletter information should communicate the following:

- General benefit features indicating that medication and counseling are available to the member with no cost sharing. Include plan procedures for receiving benefits, such as the requirement that over-the-counter medications have a doctor's prescription to be provided with no cost sharing;
- Any available special features of the plan's smoking cessation programs such as online services and counseling;
- How to find network providers to prescribe medications or provide counseling; and
- If applicable, contact information for smoking cessation program contractors.

Attachment C of this letter is a PDF flyer OPM is using to communicate the benefit to FEHB program enrollees through via agencies and our website for your reference.

In addition, plan providers should be notified of the terms of your plan's benefit so that they are able to advise plan members interested in quitting.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

John O'Brien
Director
Healthcare and Insurance