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DATE: November 13, 2006

WASHINGTON BULLETIN WA360-7-1

SUBJECT: PER - Health Benefits

Purpose. Provide information regarding 2007 Federal Health, Dental/Vision, FSA Benefits Open Season

Expiration Date. December 11, 2006

IMPORTANT - ACTION REQUIRED BY DECEMBER 11, 2006

The 2007 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB), Dental/Vision (FEDVIP), and Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Open Season is November 13 through December 11, 2006. New enrollment changes and premiums for the Health Benefits and Flexible Spending will become effective January 7, 2007. Enrollment in the new federal Dental/Vision (FEDVIP) will become effective on December 31, 2006. If you change plans, any covered expenses incurred between December 30, 2006 and January 6, 2007 will count toward the 2006 deductible of the plan you are changing from. We will be distributing information regarding the Open Season to all Washington State employees via email rather than hardcopy bulletin; employees are encouraged to review all FEHB information to see if it pertains to them and take action accordingly. Supervisors should also share Open Season messages with any employees who may not, for whatever reason, have access to email.

If you are considering enrolling or making an enrollment change, your first step should be to look through the FEHB Guide available on the OPM FEHB web-site <http://www.opm.gov/insure>. This site contains premium rates, FEHB guides, the new Federal Dental and Vision (FEDVIP) plans, Flexible Spending Account information and general information about each plan. Do not rely solely on the Guide or plan comparison when deciding to enroll in or change enrollment to a specific plan. If, after reviewing the Guide or plan comparison you decide that you may be interested in making an enrollment change, consult the specific plan's brochure for a complete description of benefits. *We will not send out printed copies of FEHB Guides and brochures as in previous years; instead, anyone unable to retrieve this information from the sources given should contact Human Resources for assistance.*

Information you provide by enrolling in the Federal Employees Health Benefits 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 Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, Medicare, or other Government benefits programs.

To be eligible to participate in this health benefits Open Season, you must be a career, career-conditional, term, or Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) employee. During Open Season any eligible employee who is not currently registered may enroll and any eligible enrollee may change from one plan or option to another, change from "self only" to "self and

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family", or make a combination of these changes. *Enrolled employees who wish to continue their current enrollment do not need to take any action during this Open Season.*

Your current health plan should send you a copy of its new brochure and a notice of their 2007 rates. You should review your plan's brochure for service and benefits changes that may affect you in the coming year, and to determine if the plan still meets your needs. *If you are enrolled in an HMO, be sure to review the brochure carefully to see if there are any changes in the plan's services, enrollment areas, or enrollment codes which could require action on your part.* Some plans limit enrollment only to those who live within their service areas. Other plans will accept enrollments from persons who live or work in the enrollment area. Plans may also have either expanded or reduced their service areas.

How to enroll or make an enrollment change to your Health Benefits (FEHB) during Open Season:

Employees are once again encouraged to use Employee Personal Page to enroll or make changes to an enrollment. Access the Internet at: <https://www.nfc.usda.gov/personal/index2.asp>. You will need your social security number and your Employee Personal Page Identification Number (PIN) to use Employee Personal Page. Please allow at least two weeks for your new PIN number to arrive if you order by mail. After accessing the system and selecting 'FEHB' from the main menu, you will be provided with your current enrollment status and given options to elect, change, or cancel coverage. **To be valid, Employee Personal Page FEHB Open Season elections must be completed by close of business on December 11, 2006.** Print the confirmation sheet once you have completed your transaction.

How to enroll in Flexible Spending (FSAFED) during Open Season:

Employees access or enroll at this web-site: <https://www.fsafeds.com/fsafeds/index.asp>. You must make an FSA election during the current Open Season for the upcoming Benefit Period or your participation will stop at the end of the current Benefit Period. **Print the confirmation sheet once you have completed your transaction.**

How to register and enroll for the Federal Dental/Vision (FEDVIP) Benefits during Open Season:

There are two parts to complete; employees register as a user and then can immediately enroll at this web-site: <https://www.benefeds.com/>. To enroll in either the Dental or Vision plans, employees will need their social security number, eligible dependent social security numbers, birth dates and current FEHB plan name/enrollment number. Print the confirmation enrollment and email from BENEFEDS.

If you are unable to access Employee Personal Page, or if your new PIN will not arrive before the end of the FEHB Open Season, you may complete a hardcopy SF 2809, Health Benefits Registration Form. **Please note that there is a new, required version of the SF-2809; dated November 2004, previous versions of this form cannot be accepted.** The new forms are available electronically on the OPM FEHB web-site, or are available in hardcopy format from Human Resources in the Spokane State Office. **To be valid, completed hardcopy forms must be received in Human Resources by fax (509) 323-2939, no later than close of business on December 11, 2006.**

If you have any questions regarding Open Season material and procedures, please contact Kathy Dickerson in Human Resources at (509) 323-2933 or Kathleen.Dickerson@wa.usda.gov.

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State Administrative Officer