

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Federal Benefits Open Season

November 8, 2021 – December 13, 2021



Federal Benefits Open Season Highlights

2022 Plan Year

- The Federal Benefits Open Season for the 2022 plan year for health insurance under the FEHB Program, dental and vision insurance under FEDVIP and flexible spending accounts under FSAFEDS will be held **from November 8 through December 13, 2021**. Federal Benefits Open Season gives Federal employees and other eligible individuals the opportunity to review their plans, make changes, and enroll in one of 275 FEHB plan choices for 2022. This is also the time for annuitants to re-evaluate their plans and decide if they are optimally covered.
- Every year, on behalf of our 8.2 million enrollees, OPM focuses on offering quality and affordable health, dental and vision benefits to Federal employees, annuitants, and their families. For the 2022 plan year, we once again have succeeded in meeting that goal.
- Throughout this national pandemic, OPM has worked with our FEHB Carriers to ensure that our enrollees have ready access to COVID-related benefits, with no cost sharing. With each new hurdle presented by the pandemic, FEHB Carriers have risen to the challenge, providing quick solutions to provide COVID-19 testing and vaccines, telehealth, and mental health benefits to our federal enrollees, and encouraging enrollees to get vaccinated, with many offering incentives to those who do! We thank them for their commitment and support.
- The FEHB Program is market-based, centered on choice and competition; therefore, it is not surprising that in most cases, major drivers of costs in the FEHB Program mimic those seen in the commercial market. Among these cost drivers are pharmacy spending as new, expensive specialty drugs enter the market, chronic illness costs, and medical technology and innovation.
- **Tribes**
 - In 2010, the Affordable Care Act added section 409 to the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA), entitling certain Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations to purchase coverage, rights, and benefits under the FEHB Program for their tribal employees.
 - Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116-260) a tribal grant school may now choose to purchase FEHB coverage for its employees.
 - Currently, there are over 4,500 employees of tribal grant schools. The inclusion of tribal grant schools will have a positive impact by providing equal access to these schools that could not previously access FEHB benefits coverage for their employees, which was extended to other Tribal employers under the Affordable Care Act.
 - As of September 3, 2021, five tribal grant schools have purchased FEHB coverage for 446 enrollees, and an additional five schools will start offering FEHB coverage later this year.
 - Currently, 132 Tribes/Tribal organizations/urban Indian organizations/tribal grant schools have purchased FEHB coverage for approximately 32,000 of their tribal employees with a total of 64,000 covered lives (enrollees and family members).

FEHB Rates and Changes

FEHB Rates:

For more than 60 years, the FEHB Program has been the largest employer-sponsored health insurance program in the United States, providing health insurance benefits for about 8.2 million Federal civilian employees, annuitants and their families and certain Tribal employees and their families.

The Government's share of premiums paid is set by law. This formula is known as the "Fair Share" formula because it is designed to maintain a consistent level of Government contributions, as a percentage of total program costs, regardless of which health plan enrollees elect.

The overall average increase in rates for Federal employees and annuitants (excluding postal actives) for 2022 is 2.4%.

- The average Government contribution for Federal employees and annuitants (excluding postal active employees) will increase by 1.9%.
- The average enrollee share for Federal employees and annuitants (excluding postal active employees) will increase an average of 3.8%.
- For 2021 we estimate the biweekly average Federal employee salary (excluding Postal employees) is about \$3,504 and the average enrollee share of premium for non-postal and annuitants is \$165.52, or about 4.7% of salary. For 2022, assuming a 2.7% salary increase, the average salary will increase to \$3,599. Without open season movement, average enrollee premium will be about \$171.74, or about 4.8% of salary.
- A rates chart is offered on [opm.gov](https://www.opm.gov) that provides the actual dollar premium increase for each FEHB plan choice and enrollment type.

Similarly Sized Employers:

The FEHB Program average 2.4% premium increase for 2022 compares quite favorably to reported increases by comparable large employers.

- On July 13, CalPERS announced rate and plan changes for 2022 that include an average 4.8% overall premium increase. CalPERS is the largest purchaser of public employee health benefits in California, and the second largest public purchaser in the nation after the federal government. CalPERS serves more than 1.5 million members and their families in their health program.
- PriceWaterhouseCoopers Health Research Institute (HRI) projects a 6.5% growth rate in medical costs for calendar year 2022 based on information available as of June 2021, slightly lower than the 7% medical cost trend in 2021. Their projection incorporates interviews with health benefits experts and health plan actuaries whose companies cover nearly 90 million

employer-sponsored large group (with at least 50 employees per Affordable Care Act) members. Key findings include:

- Employer healthcare spending in 2020 was lower than originally projected primarily due to the deferral of care because of the pandemic.
 - Costs for COVID-19 testing, vaccine administration, and costs for treating patients with COVID-19 are expected to continue for 2022.
 - Demand for mental health services and substance use disorder are expected to increase in 2022 and impact healthcare costs. Thirty percent of Americans with employer-based insurance surveyed by HRI said they had experienced symptoms of anxiety or depression because of the pandemic.
- The Business Group on Health (formerly the National Business Group on Health) conducted a survey of 136 large employers covering more than 8 million lives in 2021, looking ahead to 2022. BGH found that for 2022, employers expect cost trend to decline slightly to 5.8% after plan design changes that address COVID-19, social determinants of health, expanding access to mental health care, and virtual health are made. Due to the impact of deferred care and pent-up demand as a result of COVID, employers anticipate seeing an increase in medical services, late-stage cancer diagnoses, greater numbers of people with long-term mental health and substance use issues and other adverse effects that could last well into future years. This is attributed to many people staying at home during the numerous lockdowns, and doctor visits and preventative screenings were delayed or missed altogether.

FEHB Cost Drivers Impacting 2022 Premiums:

- FEHB Carriers indicate that the top contributors to their 2022 rate increase are specialty drugs, medical pharmacy (drugs that are billed on the medical benefit), chronic illness costs, and medical technology and innovation. The 2022 rate increase was partially offset by lower than anticipated utilization during the early months of the COVID pandemic that was not fully captured in 2021 rates as well as FEHB Carrier renegotiation of PBM contracts.
- Increasing costs related to COVID-19 and mental health were also mentioned by several FEHB Carriers.
- The coronavirus pandemic cost the FEHB Program about \$1 billion (2% of 2020 claims) to test and treat COVID-19 patients (COVID-specific claims information is only available for 2020. Complete 2021 claim cost data will not be available until June of 2022.)

The pandemic-related costs will likely persist in 2022 but potentially decline due to more vaccinations available for our population, especially with the various vaccination mandate/requirements at the workplace issued by the Federal Government, state and local governments, as well as employers in the private sector.

FEHB Historical Annual Average Premium Increases

Year	Average Percent Increase
2022	2.4%
2021	3.6%
2020	4.0%
2019	1.3%
2018	4.0%

FEHB Plan Choices:

- There are 275 plan choices in 2022 (In 2021, there are 276)
 - 18 Fee-for-Service (FFS) plans available
 - 14 nation-wide FFS plan choices open to all
 - 4 FFS plans with availability limited to certain groups (Compass Rose, Foreign Service Benefit Plan, Rural Carriers Benefit Plan, and Panama Canal Area Benefit Plan) (same as last year)
 - 192 HMO plan choices (excluding HDHPs and CDHPs; in 2021, there are 212)
 - 37 High Deductible Health Plan choices (HDHP), 2 of which are nation-wide (In 2021, there are 18)
 - 28 Consumer Driven Health Plan choices (CDHP) (In 2021, there are 28)
 - For example, an enrollee living in Washington DC has 38 plan choices, versus an enrollee living in Sioux Falls, SD with 25 plan choices. (Excludes FFS plans with availability limited to certain groups)
 - There is one new FEHB Carrier in 2022, with a new high deductible health plan (HDHP) option:
 - HealthKeepers, Inc., Virginia
 - There are 23 new plan choices with existing FEHB Carriers for 2022

New Plan Choices with Existing FEHB Carriers for 2022

Plan Name	Option
Humana CoverageFirst - Lexington	Value
HealthKeepers, Inc.	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst – South Florida	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst – Austin, TX	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst - Orlando	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst - Atlanta	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst – Central and NW, IL	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst –Macon, GA	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst – Columbus, GA	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst – Chicago and NW Indiana	HDHP

Plan Name	Option
Humana CoverageFirst – Portions of Kansas and Missouri	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst - Tampa	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst – Tucson, AZ	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst - Phoenix	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst - Houston	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst – Cincinnati area	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst – Corpus Christi, TX	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst - Tennessee	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst – San Antonio	HDHP
Humana CoverageFirst - Daytona	HDHP
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Southern California	PROSPER
Humana CoverageFirst - Louisville	Value
BCBS of Colorado	HDHP

FEHB Program enrollees have a number of Plan choices available to them regardless of where they reside. The chart below identifies examples of that.

Region	State	Approximate Number of Enrollees*	Number Plan Choices Offered for 2022
Northeast	Maine	23,700	19
Southeast	DC	162,816	38
Midwest	Illinois	116,000	38
West	New Mexico	39,200	22

* Enrollee numbers are approximate since they are from 2020, as 2021 numbers are not available.

FEHB and Medicare Part B:

FEHB Carriers continue to address and respond to the needs of our annuitants who are also Medicare beneficiaries. There are FEHB plan choices that offer some type of Medicare Part B incentive – either through copay, coinsurance or deductible waivers or Part B premium reimbursement. The FEHB [Plan Comparison Tool](#) (PCT) makes this information more readily available to enrollees and identifies plan choices with the Medicare Part B incentive. The PCT features a display that allows individuals to see exactly what they are expected to pay if they have both Medicare A and B as their primary coverage and FEHB as their secondary coverage.

- There are 4 new plan options that will now offer Medicare Part B reimbursement for individuals who also enroll in the carrier’s Medicare Advantage Plan:
 - Humana Value Plan
 - MHBP Standard Option
 - Compass Rose

- Rural Carrier Benefit
- This is in addition to existing plan options that offer some form of Medicare Part B reimbursement depending on the FEHB enrollees' enrollment in Medicare Part B or Medicare Advantage:
 - Aetna Advantage (Advantage)
 - Aetna Direct (CDHP)
 - APWU (High) Medicare Advantage Plan
 - Blue Cross Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan (Basic)
 - GEHA (High)
 - Health Alliance Plan (High & Standard)
 - Kaiser Permanente - Colorado (High & Standard)
 - Kaiser Permanente - Georgia (High)
 - Kaiser Permanente - Mid-Atlantic States (High)
 - Kaiser Permanente - Northwest (High & Standard)
 - Kaiser Permanente - Northern California (High & Standard)
 - Kaiser Permanente - Southern California (High & Standard)
 - Kaiser Permanente - Northwest (High & Standard)
 - Kaiser Permanente – Washington Core (High & Standard)
 - Medical Mutual of Ohio Southwest (Standard)
 - Medical Mutual of Ohio Northeast (Standard)
 - MD I.P.A. (High)
 - UnitedHealthcare Choice Open Access HMO (High)
 - UnitedHealthcare Choice Plus Advanced (Tampa, Orlando, Miami, and Atlanta) (Value)
 - UnitedHealthcare Choice Plus Advanced (Chicago, San Antonio, DC, Northern Virginia, and Maryland) (Value)
 - UnitedHealthcare Choice Plus Primary - East Region (High)

- UnitedHealthcare Choice Plus Primary - West Region (High)
- UnitedHealthcare Choice Primary - East Region (High)
- UnitedHealthcare Choice Primary - West Region (High)
- UPMC Health Plan (Standard)

Medicare Coordination of Benefits (COB) information is found in Section 9 of each FEHB Program brochure.

Benefits Overview

OPM continues its focus on key topics, trends, and Administration priorities for the 2022 plan year. The [2022 Plan Year Call Letter](#) addressed the following topics: COVID-19, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services, the Opioid Epidemic, Prescription Prior Authorization, Addressing Low Value Care (U.S. Preventive Services Task Force “USPSTF” Ratings), Medical Foods and Iatrogenic Infertility.

The FEHB and COVID-19

OPM has taken multiple actions to safeguard the health and well-being of the Federal workforce and annuitants during the COVID-19 pandemic. All FEHB Carriers have responded to OPM’s call for action, waiving cost-sharing and prior authorization requirements for COVID-19 diagnostic and antibody testing, telehealth or other remote care services, and will continue to cover COVID-19 vaccinations and all subsequent booster vaccines as soon as possible after FDA authorization or approval. Many FEHB Carriers are offering incentives of \$25-\$75 to members for receiving a full COVID-19 vaccine. Plan brochures will be available for more specific information in November.

Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Services

OPM and FEHB Carriers continue to focus on mental health benefits by continual monitoring of both provider access and availability. FEHB Carriers are providing ongoing telehealth expansion which address provider shortages within mental and behavioral health, including member education on the availability of these services, as well as continue to make additional efforts to destigmatize mental health disorders and services. FEHB Carriers also focused on programs to address the needs of pregnant persons, improve access for rural populations, and adolescent and youth who may require treatment for SUD.

Opioid Epidemic

FEHB Carriers continue to emphasize nonopioid and nonpharmacologic treatments as well as other efforts as part of an ongoing comprehensive, multifaceted prevention, treatment, and supportive approach for addressing and reducing opioid-involved overdose deaths. FEHB Carriers continue to take a comprehensive multi-pronged evidence-based approach to addressing the opioid crisis by efforts such as putting in place safety monitoring programs to ensure safe dispensing, utilization and disposal of opioids, expanded coverage of and access to non-opioids and non-pharmacological pain therapies and devices.

Prescription Prior Authorization

Starting in 2022, FEHB Carriers will have a process to review all expiring prescription Prior Authorizations (PA) and notify members 45 days before the expiration of a PA for a maintenance medication.

Addressing Low Value Care (USPSTF Ratings)

OPM instructed FEHB Carriers **not to cover as preventive benefits**, those services with a sole rating of “D” from the USPSTF. 96% of Carriers are covering all preventive services recommended by the USPSTF with an “A” or “B” rating as a preventive service, including those listed in the 2022 Tech Guidance. All Carriers confirmed they are not covering services with a sole rating of “D” from the USPSTF as preventive benefits.

Benefits for Certain Medical Foods

Many FEHB Carriers provide coverage for medical food regardless of age for those affected by inborn errors of metabolism (IEM).

Coverage for Fertility Preservation in FEHB Members with the Possibility of Iatrogenic Infertility

OPM encouraged all FEHB Carriers to provide coverage for standard fertility preservation procedures for men and women as recognized by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) and/or American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), for anyone facing the possibility of “iatrogenic infertility,” that is, infertility caused by a necessary medical intervention.

Gender Affirming Care Services

Beginning in 2016, no FEHB Carrier may have a general exclusion for services, drugs or supplies related to gender dysphoria. They **must** provide benefits for all medically necessary covered services, including surgical services, and prescriptions (including hormones) and mental health counseling and services for those who are considering or wish to transition. FEHB Carriers must also provide a non-discriminatory formulary design that prevents selection bias or discrimination. This means that it does not have cost or access barriers imposed by disease or condition. FEHB Carriers were also instructed to conduct a comprehensive review of all written materials that are member-facing to include website, downloadable materials, letters, and explanation of benefits (EOBs) and update as needed with inclusive language pertaining to LGBTQ+ members. Plan brochures include covered services in the index to help members find covered services more readily.

FEDVIP Rates and Changes

Following the challenges created by the COVID pandemic, we are adding some exciting and important new features to the FEDVIP program for Plan Year 2022.

- The average premium increase from plan year 2021 is 0.81% for dental plans.
 - Increase is weighted by plan size based upon enrollment as of March 2021.
- The average premium increase from plan year 2021 is 0.95% for vision plans.
 - Increase is weighted by plan size based upon enrollment as of March 2021.

- For the 2022 plan year FEDVIP Carriers have made changes advantageous to enrollees to their plan offerings. Specific plan information for dental and vision benefits and rates will be available on BENEFEDS.COM in late October or early November.
- Twelve dental carriers provide 23 dental plan options available across the Program. Seven dental carriers offer fourteen nationwide dental plan options available to all potential enrollees.
- Five Vision Carriers provide 10 nationwide vision plan options available to all potential enrollees.

2022 FEDVIP Dental Carriers

Nationwide/International	Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aetna Dental • Blue Cross Blue Shield Dental • Delta Dental’s Federal Employees Dental Program • GEHA Connection Dental Federal • The MetLife Federal Dental Plan • United Concordia Dental • UnitedHealthcare Dental Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominion National • EmblemHealth Dental • HealthPartners Dental Plan • Humana Dental • Triple-S Salud

2022 FEDVIP Vision Carriers

Nationwide/ International
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aetna Vision Preferred • Blue Cross Blue Shield Vision • The MetLife Federal Vision Plan • UnitedHealthcare Vision Plan • VSP Vision Care

- In total, FEDVIP provides dental and vision benefits to a total of 7.2 million Federal employees, uniformed service members, annuitants, and their family members. It provides comprehensive dental and vision insurance at competitive group rates with leading dental and vision Carriers. FEDVIP enrollees give the program high marks for quality and value.

FSAFEDS

- As in past years, Federal employees are encouraged to consider the tax savings available through the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS). Setting aside the amount projected to spend in out-of-pocket health, dental and vision expenses in a flexible spending account (FSA), saves Federal employees money. Participants may now carryover up to \$550 of unused amounts in their health care flexible spending account (HCFSA) and limited expense (dental and/or vision) flexible spending account (LEX HCFSA) remaining at the end of 2021 into 2022.
- In response to the nation's COVID-19 pandemic, legislation and the IRS offered flexibility for individuals to, among other things, make changes to their medical and dependent care elections to account for unexpected changes to these projected expenses. Based on this guidance, OPM provided a 30-day special election period (SEP) for current enrollees to increase or decrease planned contributions to their FSAFEDS dependent care and health care accounts. The SEP also allowed those who did not enroll for 2021 to enroll for the first time.
- OPM also implemented an extended grace period to incur and receive reimbursement for 2020 dependent care flexible spending account (DCFSA) funds through December 31, 2021 and the 2021 grace period is extended through December 31, 2022.

Key Dates for FEHB and FEDVIP

- **Early November:** Full FEHB and FEDVIP plan brochures available on the OPM website in a Section 508-compliant format; benefits information available on the Plan Comparison Tool. Individuals may download a PDF version of the brochure for printing, if desired.
- **November 8:** Open Season begins
- **December 13:** Open Season ends

FEHB Effective Dates for Plan Year 2022

Action	Employees	Annuitants	Compensationers (OWCP)
Enroll, change enrollment, premium conversion change in election	January 2, 2022	January 1, 2022	January 2, 2022
Cancellation	January 1, 2022	December 31, 2021	January 1, 2022

FEDVIP Effective Date for Plan Year 2022

- January 1, 2022

FSAFEDS Effective Date for Benefit Year 2022

- January 1, 2022



U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Healthcare and Insurance

1900 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20415

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