
FEHB Program Carrier Letter

All Carriers

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Insurance Programs

Letter No. 2001-12

Date: April 24, 2001

Fee-for-service [09] Experience-rated HMO [11] Community-rated [11]

**SUBJECT: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act:
Privacy Regulations**


Recently, we've heard from a number of FEHB plans expressing concerns regarding the impact of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) final privacy regulations¹ on the FEHB Program, particularly as it relates to information on disputed claims.

As you are well aware, we often request patient specific claims information from FEHB carriers in making disputed claims determinations. Please know that there is nothing in the final privacy rules that would inhibit or prevent FEHB carriers from providing the information we currently request. It is appropriate and important that you continue to provide this information when requested.

We recognize that implementing these new regulations will be a major undertaking for all of us, and we plan to work closely with all FEHB plans. Within the next few months, we intend to form a workgroup of Plan, OPM and other advisors to develop guidelines, standards and processes on privacy and individually identifiable health information as well as resolve other HIPAA implementation issues across the FEHB Program.

In the meantime, if you have concerns or suggestions, please contact Ms. Laurie Bodenheimer of the Insurance Policy and Information Division. She may be reached at 202-606-0004 or by email at lrbodenh@opm.gov.

Sincerely,



Abby L. Block
Assistant Director
for Insurance Programs

¹ See the Administrative Simplification web site <http://aspe.hhs.gov/admsimp/>.