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# FEHB Program Carrier Letter

All Carriers

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

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**Letter No. 2000-51**

**Date: November 27, 2000**

Fee-for-service [45]    Experience-rated HMO [46]    Community-rated HMO [46]

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**SUBJECT: 2001 Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Survey**

This letter provides information for the 2001 Consumer Assessments of Health Plans Survey<sup>1</sup> (CAHPS®). All Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plans with at least 500 FEHB subscribers (contracts) as of March 31, 2000, must administer the CAHPS® 2.0H Adult Commercial Survey (including the HEDIS®<sup>2</sup> Advising Smokers to Quit measures). Enclosure 1 contains a copy of the questionnaire.

Other Changes for 2001

- The Sample Size for the Adult Survey will increase from 850 to 1,500 members due to the addition of the Advising Smokers to Quit measures.
- We will not require FEHB plans to add supplemental questions to the Adult Survey.
- We are not requiring FEHB plans to conduct the 2001 CAHPS® 2.0H Child Survey or the HEDIS Management of Menopause (MoM) Survey. However, regardless of the size of your FEHB enrollment, if you conduct the 2001 CAHPS® 2.0H Adult, 2.0H Child or MoM Survey, you must send us a copy of your survey results.
- Our deadline for final member level and summary level data files is June 15, 2001.
- All Plans must submit their member level data files to the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for calculation of survey results and generation of validated member level data files and summary level data files.
- We will not require plans to add FEHB plan names and Sub-Codes to member level and summary level data files.
- We require you to provide separately a Crosswalk file that will allow us to match your NCQA data files with your FEHB plan name and Sub-Code (see additional information regarding the Crosswalk below).

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<sup>1</sup> CAHPS® is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

<sup>2</sup> HEDIS® is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

## Reporting Deadlines

Please note the following reporting deadlines for submitting information and data to OPM:

- ❑ Vendor Selection Form - December 8, 2000
- ❑ Preliminary Crosswalk - January 19, 2001
- ❑ Crosswalk - two weeks after NCQA issues Plan ID's
- ❑ Member level data – June 15, 2001
- ❑ Final summary level data files (must be NCQA validated) – June 15, 2001

## Public Burden Statement

Please include the following statement on questionnaires you mail to respondents: “This information collection has been approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (Control Number 3206-0236) and is in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. We estimate that it will take an average of 20 minutes to complete, including the time to read instructions and to gather necessary information. Send comments regarding our estimate and any suggestions for minimizing respondent burden, reducing completion time or any other aspect of this information collection to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Reports and Forms Manager, (OMB Number 3206-0236), Washington, DC 20415-7900. Your participation in this information collection is voluntary. The OMB Number, 3206-0236, is currently valid. OPM may not collect this information, and you are not required to respond, unless this number is displayed.” Also, include the following statement in the upper right corner of each questionnaire: “Form approved: OMB No. 3206-0236.”

## Data Collection Vendor

FEHB plans must use a NCQA Certified HEDIS Survey Vendor to administer their CAHPS® 2.0H Surveys. You may contract with any NCQA Certified survey vendor. A list of approved vendors is available online at <http://www.ncqa.org/Pages/Programs/HEDIS/2001vendors.htm>. Even if you plan to use the same vendor you used last year, please check the list to verify that your vendor is NCQA Certified to administer HEDIS 2001 CAHPS® 2.0H Surveys.

Please type in all of the information requested in the enclosed Vendor Selection Form (Enclosure 2) and return to us by December 8. This form gives us your vendor's name and contact information. If you offer more than one FEHB plan, please list the name and FEHB Sub-Code for each plan you will be submitting CAHPS® data. You should e-mail the completed forms to [rpierce@opm.gov](mailto:rpierce@opm.gov). We will also accept the forms by facsimile at (202) 606-0036, or by overnight mail at:

U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Retirement and Insurance Service  
Office of Insurance Programs – CAHPS® Team  
1900 E Street, NW., Room 3415  
Washington, DC 20415

### Pre-Administration Audit Requirement

FEHB plans seeking NCQA Accreditation and plans that intend to include survey results in NCQA's information products (i.e., Quality Compass®<sup>3</sup>) must arrange for an NCQA Certified HEDIS Compliance Auditor to verify the integrity of the sample frame before the vendor draws the sample and administers the CAHPS® 2.0H survey. Please contact NCQA's Technical Inquiry Line via e-mail at [hedis@ncqa.org](mailto:hedis@ncqa.org) or by telephone at (888) 275-7585, if you have questions about this requirement. If you are an FEHB plan that is not seeking NCQA Accreditation and do not intend to include survey results in NCQA's information products, you do not have to meet this requirement.

### Survey Instruments & Protocols

Your vendor must use the CAHPS® 2.0H questionnaire (see Enclosure 1). Vendors must administer the survey and report survey results according to the protocols in NCQA's HEDIS® 2001, Volume 3 (Specifications for Survey Measures), including subsequent updates. NCQA vendors have received copies of HEDIS® - Volume 3, which includes the survey instrument and protocols. You may order copies from NCQA's Publication Department at (800) 839-6487.

### Membership Data & Sample Frame

Please work closely with your vendor to draw sample frames for your survey. HMO and POS plans must draw the sample according to NCQA protocols. Fee-for-Service plans must also use the NCQA protocols, except for the sample frame. They must draw the sample frame from all currently enrolled FEHB members, regardless of their Medicare status.

Because the Advising Smokers to Quit measures will be included in 2001, the sample size for the Adult Commercial survey is 1,500 members.

Please note that this year we do not require you to add your FEHB name or Sub-Code to the Survey data files or header record. We will use a separate "Crosswalk" described below to identify plan data submissions.

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<sup>3</sup> Quality Compass is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

## Crosswalk

When your vendor submits member level and summary level data to OPM, they will need to provide a “Crosswalk” file to identify plan data submissions. The Crosswalk will allow us to match up NCQA Sub-ID’s with your plan’s unique FEHB Sub-Code. Also, the Crosswalk will identify plans that are sharing survey data. Enclosure 3, contains a list of FEHB plans and their unique Sub-Codes and a sample of what the Crosswalk should look like.

Provide a preliminary Crosswalk for your plan(s) without NCQA Sub-ID by January 19, 2001. The File must include the names of the plan(s) that you will survey, the State(s) in which the plan provide services and the plan’s FEHB Sub-Code (See Enclosure 3 for an example of the Crosswalk).

We require a second Crosswalk from your vendor, with NCQA Sub-ID’s, two weeks after NCQA provide Sub-ID’s to vendors. In addition to items in the Preliminary Crosswalk, this file must include: member level file name, summary level file name and the plan’s NCQA Sub-ID (See Enclosure 3 for an example). A final Crosswalk must accompany your data submissions to OPM. Please direct questions regarding the Crosswalk to: Paul Kallaur or Nina Smith with the Center for the Study of Service at (202) 454-3030, or by e-mail at: [pkallaur@cssresearch.org](mailto:pkallaur@cssresearch.org) or [nsmith@cssresearch.org](mailto:nsmith@cssresearch.org).

## Reporting Survey Data to OPM

Your vendor must submit CAHPS® 2.0H member level data files to NCQA according to NCQA’s Adult Survey File Specifications and Layouts. To ensure consistency and comparability of survey results we require all plans to submit their member level data files to NCQA for calculation of survey results through their vendor. NCQA will calculate survey results and create validated member level data files and summary level data files on behalf of vendors.

## Reporting Format

We will accept your member level data files and summary level data files after they have been processed by NCQA. Your vendor may submit data via e-mail, diskette or compact disc (CD). You may include results for multiple plans on a single diskette or CD. All submission must include a content label/sheet and a Crosswalk. Please send all data files to ORI via e-mail at [oridata@aol.com](mailto:oridata@aol.com) or by overnight mail to:

ORI  
Attention: Sue Lynd  
171 Elden Street  
Suite 160  
Herndon, VA 20170

Please direct questions regarding data files to Sue Lynd or Carla Trexler with ORI at (703) 478-0910.

Processing Fee

Each plan participating in the survey will be responsible for a pro rata share of the total cost of compiling, processing and reporting CAHPS® 2.0H Survey data to OPM. The 2001 processing fee is \$283.00 per FEHB Sub-Code. ORI will send you an invoice for the data processing fee. The fees are payable directly to ORI and will be due on June 15, 2001.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and look forward to working with you. Please contact Ralph Pierce ([rpierce@opm.gov](mailto:rpierce@opm.gov)) or Tanya Morrow ([tmmorrow@opm.gov](mailto:tmmorrow@opm.gov)) with any questions you may have. You may reach them by telephone at (202) 606-0745.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Frank D. Titus".

Frank D. Titus  
Assistant Director  
For Insurance Programs

Enclosures