

September 22, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Benefit Coordinators

FROM: Frank Heiny, Interim Commissioner
Georgia Merit System 

Dr. Rhonda Medows, Commissioner
Georgia Department of Community Health 

SUBJECT: 2007 Open Enrollment

We are pleased to announce that the annual Open Enrollment Period for the 2007 Plan Year will begin on Tuesday, October 10 and end on Thursday, November 9, 2006. There will be a common web portal, www.oe2007.ga.gov, for employees to make their benefit selections for the Flexible Benefits options through the Georgia Merit System (GMS) and State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) health options through the Department of Community Health.

In the weeks leading up to Open Enrollment, you will be receiving informational emails that will help in providing assistance to your employees. All necessary forms, booklets, brochures and instructions will be available to you at www.oe2007.ga.gov by Thursday, September 28, 2006. These include the *You Decide!* booklet, Flexible Benefits Department Guide and the SHBP Employee Health Plan Decision Guide. For employees who need a hardcopy of the *What's New* brochure agencies may order a supply from GMS and the Employee Health Plan Decision Guide from SHBP.

Train-the-Trainer Sessions

Again this year, for your convenience, we are offering training via “web cast”, allowing coordinators to review communication materials at will. GMS and SHBP are offering one-stop shopping, ranging from full streaming multi-media to slides with audio capabilities. Viewing capabilities will be on the GMS web site for flexible benefits and the SHBP web site for health benefits.

Benefit Fairs

Benefit Fairs will be held statewide to assist employees with benefit questions. Employees will typically have the opportunity to meet with representatives from the State Health Benefit Plan (and HMOs where applicable), Flexible Benefits Program, Peach State Reserves Program and the Employees' Retirement System.

Some fairs may also have free health screenings. Please encourage employees to attend the fair closest to them. (See a copy of the attached Benefit Fairs schedule.)

Please contact the Flexible Benefits Program at (404) 656-2757 if there are any employees with hearing impairments who will need interpreter services at any of the benefit fairs.

Provider Directories/Meetings

The State Health Benefit Plan will not distribute provider directories this year. Providers can join and drop out of the network during the year so it is best for employees to call their provider to see if they will be participating in the network or to go on-line. The websites for the vendors are listed on the inside cover of the Decision Guide. You may also contact the vendor if you would like to have a presentation or Q&A for your employees.

If you need to request a small supply of directories or want to have a vendor to do a presentation to your employees, contact each vendor directly:

- United HealthCare: Kathleen Clifford (770) 300-3509, kathleen_a_clifford@uhc.com,
- BlueChoice: Traci Lyon, (404) 682-9238, Traci.Lyon@wellpoint.com
- Cigna: Valerie Carpenter 404-443-8819, Valerie.Carpenter@cigna.com
- Kaiser Permanente: Sheila Leung 404-364-7158, sheila.leung@kp.org.
- TriCare Supplement: Pauline Marshall, (800) 638-2610 ext 113; pmarshall@asicorporation.com

SHBP Surcharges

Again this year, employees currently enrolled will have to answer the tobacco and spousal surcharge questions under the State Health Benefit Plan at www.oe2007.ga.gov. Employees who fail to go online and answer the surcharge questions will retain the same coverage option and tier they currently have but will be assessed the applicable surcharges. SHBP will provide you with a list of employees who have not confirmed. The report, MEWBNCFM MEMS Not Confirmed on Web Report, will be posted in View Direct and will be updated nightly beginning

October 10, 2006. This report will include employees with no current coverage and employees who have not confirmed their 2007 benefit election. Please use this report to remind your employees that they will have to pay the applicable surcharges if they do not answer the surcharge questions.

New employees or employees who have previously declined coverage and who wish to enroll during the Open Enrollment will also have to answer the surcharge questions.

Electronic Open Enrollment (EOE), Option Statement and Confirmation Statement

Option Statements will not be printed during the 2007 Open Enrollment. All eligible employees including employees hired between September 1 and November 1, 2006, should review their Flexible Benefit options by accessing the EOE web site. Only those employees listed on the **MEMS Web Availability Cross Reference Report** will be able to make their health benefit elections on-line. Employees not listed on this report will have to complete a Membership/Miscellaneous Update Form (SHBP 66-090).

Enrollment information will be based on October 1, 2006 data. The web application will be available each day from 4:00 a.m. to midnight beginning Tuesday, October 10, 2006. The website will close at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 9, 2006. The system generated 2007 Open Enrollment Confirmation Statements will be printed immediately after the Open Enrollment.

As in the past, to minimize the number of corrections required, Phoenix State Payroll departments, Community Service Boards, and local health offices are to verify and correct SSN, birth date, address and salary information in the Phoenix HR system prior to Open Enrollment. This data will be interfaced from the Phoenix System to the Flex System. Details regarding updating the Phoenix System will be included in the Flexible Benefits Program Department Guide.

We recognize that you and your staff are responsible for understanding and processing a great deal of information. Please remember the staffs of both the Georgia Merit System and the Department of Community Health are available to assist you. If you have questions, please contact staff at GMS at (404) 656-2757 or DCH staff at (404) 656-6322. We appreciate your continued support and wish you the best Open Enrollment ever!

FH/RM:rdh

Attachments