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To: New York State Agency Health Benefits Administrators; Participating Employer Health Benefits Administrators; Participating Agency Health Benefits Administrators

From: Employee Benefits Division

Subject: New Department Web Site - www.cs.state.ny.us

Date: March 27, 2006

As part of the NYS Department of Civil Service's Strategic Directions initiative, a newly-designed Department web site was introduced on February 22, 2006. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the new site so you can assist employees who may have questions. This memo provides some basic information about navigation and content available on the new site and offers some tips about how to use our web-based health insurance resources in your role as agency Health Benefits Administrator (HBA).

This new site is designed to be more visitor-friendly, organizing Department information for the visitor rather than by the Divisions responsible for the content. The four main visitor categories are: Job Seekers, Employees, Retirees and HR Professionals. For the NYSHIP-related content, we've customized the content to the visitor's group-specific benefits.

The site is available at the same address, www.cs.state.ny.us. The former NYS OnLine web site health benefits information has been integrated into the Department site. From the homepage, www.cs.state.ny.us, select the Benefit Programs button on left hand navigation or select Employees, Retirees or HR Professionals to find links to enrollee and local government health benefits information. Visitors accessing the public site through either the Employees or Retirees tabs will be directed to a new "group wizard" help function that prompts the user to identify his/her group (employer type or negotiating unit) and health insurance plan (Empire Plan, HMO or dental and/or vision only) from a drop-down menu. The group-specific page displays continue throughout navigation of the site and each subsequent visit to the site. The user may change to a different group at any time by selecting "Change Your Group" at the top of each page.

You will notice that all content from the old site is not yet available on the new site. We are taking this opportunity to shift the focus of the site, making it more customer-friendly and less of an electronic collection of our print publications. Please let us know what you think of this new approach. We will notify you as new functions and features are added. The attached navigation instructions are designed to assist you in responding to questions from enrollees (or your own) regarding the site(s).

For the HBA administrative site, now called HBA Online (formerly ebd_online), select HR Professionals on the homepage or the link under Benefit Programs. In addition, the former direct link to ebd_online, www.cs.state.ny.us/ebdonline, is still operational. Password access to the new HBA Online remains the same as access to the former ebd_online. If you have questions about access to HBA Online, call the Department of Civil Service Help Desk at 1-800-422-3671, or in Albany call 457-5406 or e-mail Helpdesk@cs.state.ny.us

NOTE: If you have the need to check information about various groups frequently, it may be helpful to do so using HBA Online rather than the public site, where you will need to change your group each time.

This transition has been a very large undertaking for the Division due to the volume of information available on the sites and it is still underway. We encourage you to visit the site often to learn of new features and provide any feedback you might have to the EBD Communications Unit at 518-457-7577.

Attachment