



ELIOT SPITZER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL SERVICE
ALFRED E. SMITH STATE OFFICE BUILDING
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12239
www.cs.state.ny.us

NANCY G. GROENWEGEN
COMMISSIONER

NY07-37

MEMORANDUM

TO: New York State Health Benefits Administrators
FROM: Employee Benefits Division
SUBJECT: Communications Plan: Option Transfer Period for 2008
DATE: September 24, 2007

We are pleased to announce the communications schedule for this year's Option Transfer Period. A separate memorandum will address transactions and other option transfer items.

Poster

Later this week, we will send you option transfer posters equal to two percent of your NYSHIP enrollment as a reminder of the Option Transfer Period, the Flex Spending Account deadline of November 16 and the pre-tax deadline of November 30. Please post them immediately and leave them up through the Option Transfer Period.

Planning for Option Transfer

Planning for Option Transfer flyers will be mailed to enrollee homes in late September. Included in the flyer is a four-page insert announcing online option transfer through MyNYSHIP, our new secure web site where active New York State employees can get online access to their own health insurance record.

We will ship you a supply of *Planning for Option Transfer* with the MyNYSHIP insert equal to three percent of your NYSHIP enrollment. Please distribute these at information meetings and to employees who request them. If your agency requires more than three percent, please use the enclosed Special Order Form to order more. Or, use the online publication ordering system. Look for [NF0220 Planning for OT/September 2007].

MyNYSHIP Flyer

You may also order the MyNYSHIP flyer separate from *Planning for Option Transfer* using the online publication ordering system. Look for [NY0723 MyNYSHIP Insert/September 07]. For more information on MyNYSHIP and online option transfer, see memos NY07-11 and NY07-39.

Health Insurance Choices

We will also ship you a supply of *Choices*, this year's option transfer booklet, in October. We are publishing only one version of *Choices* for active employees this year. Please distribute these at informational meetings and to employees who request them. Our inventory will accommodate agencies that need more than the supply shipped. You can order more copies of *Choices* and other option transfer publications using the Special Order Form enclosed with this memo, but please do not order publications until you have received your shipment. Or, use the online publication ordering system. Look for [AL0730 Active Choices for 2008].

Benefits Information

The Empire Plan benefit information in *Active Choices* is up to date for January 1, 2008. We will provide any additional information to you as it becomes available. Please provide employees with the most recent group-specific information when they request it.

Distribution of Rate Flyer

A four-page rate flyer, *Rates & Deadlines for 2008*, will be mailed to enrollee homes when rates are approved. The rate flyers provide the rates for 2008, the deadline for option changes and other important dates, such as payroll deduction dates. We will send you a supply equal to three percent of your NYSHIP enrollment at the same time.

(over)

Option Transfer Policy for NYSHIP enrollees with Retiree Benefits

Remember, NYSHIP enrollees with retiree benefits* are permitted to change health insurance options at any time once during a 12-month period. This policy was changed in 2003 to allow retirees more flexibility and time to consider personal factors affecting their health insurance option.

Retiree Choices/Information for other enrollees

Retiree *Choices* will continue to be published in four regional versions. The regional versions will be printed and mailed to enrollee homes as soon as they are available. Retirees will receive the version appropriate to the region where they live. There will also be a Statewide Retiree *Choices* booklet published for the 2008 plan year. We will send five statewide versions first and a separate shipment of one copy of each regional version when they are available. Please distribute the statewide version to new retirees. Any enrollees on Leave Without Pay, COBRA and other direct-pay enrollees will receive Statewide Retiree *Choices* and rate sheets in the mail at home. You may order Statewide Retiree *Choices* throughout 2008. Regional Retiree *Choices* will not be available for reorder.

We will mail separately a *2008 Rates & Information for Retirees* flyer which includes the rates for each health insurance option for State agency retirees and some dependent survivors of the Thruway Authority. This publication also includes a notice to retirees of other Participating Employers that they should contact their former employer for 2008 rates.

Information on the Internet

All Option Transfer publications, including the rate flyers will be available on the Department of Civil Service web site at www.cs.state.ny.us as soon as we sign off for printing. To view the latest Option Transfer information available, go to www.cs.state.ny.us, click on Benefit Programs, then on NYSHIP Online. Select the group if prompted, and then click on Health Benefits. Choose Rates and Health Plan Choices.

This information will also be available on the Employee Benefits' administrative web site, HBA Online, www.cs.state.ny.us/ebdonline. Select Health Plan Choices on the home page to go to Option Transfer information. *Note: This site continues to be your best option if you need to check benefit information for different groups frequently.*

We will remove the 2007 Option Transfer information from both the public and administrative web sites in October. However, if you wish to view this information, it will still be available in the archives of each site. From the Department of Civil Service home page, click on Benefit Programs, then on NYSHIP Online. Select the group if prompted, and then click on Using Your Benefits. Choose Archived Publications. From the HBA Online home page, select Publications and Forms then Archived Publications.

To order health benefits materials: A Special Order Form for Option Transfer publications is enclosed so that you may order additional materials during the Option Transfer Period. If you need more publications, you can fax us the Special Order Form, which is attached to this memo. To order *Choices* during the Option Transfer Period, fax us the Special Order Form attached to this memo and also packed in the box with *Choices*, but please do not order publications until you have received your shipment. To order Option Transfer materials after the Option Transfer Period, please use the regular Publications Supply Request Forms. The Special Order Form is also available on HBA Online.

To reach Communications: Please call (518) 457-7577 or FAX (518) 402-4697.

**NYSHIP Enrollees with Retiree benefits include: Retirees, Vestees, Dependent Survivors and Enrollees Covered Under Preferred List Provisions of New York State Government and Participating Employers and COBRA enrollees with their NYSHIP benefits.*

Enclosures
Special Order Form