PA10-14

TO: Health Benefits Administrators of Participating Agencies
FROM: Employee Benefits Division
SUBJECT: Empire Plan Benefit Cards
DATE: June 3, 2010

As a result of a change in The Empire Plan benefit card vendor, the Department of Civil Service is unable to issue Empire Plan benefit cards for a limited period of time. This will apply to any new or replacement benefit card requests submitted on or after **May 27, 2010**, and is expected to continue for several weeks. Please advise your enrollees of this fact when placing orders for cards. During this time period, a personalized letter will be mailed to Empire Plan enrollees/dependents for all benefit card requests and transactions. A sample letter is attached for your information. Letters will be mailed on a weekly basis beginning June 11th and continuing for a period of two to six weeks. Enrollees who receive letters will be issued benefit cards without the need for further action when production resumes. We will notify you as soon as regular benefit card production resumes.

Enrollees are advised to use this letter to access their benefits and carry it with them when they visit a pharmacy or provider. The letter will include the name of the enrollee, all covered dependents, the Empire Plan ID number, and a sample image of the front and back of the Empire Plan card. (Note: A letter will also be sent to dependents living at a separate second address if such address is on the NYBEAS file).

Enrollees are directed to call The Empire Plan toll-free telephone number (1-877-7-NYSHIP) if they have trouble accessing their benefits using the letter. We recognize that enrollees may also contact agency HBAs regarding the letter or problems they may experience. We appreciate your patience and assistance in helping to handle these questions. Please contact your processor with any unique circumstances that may occur.

Attachment