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NY 14-28

TO: New York State Health Benefits Administrators
FROM: Employee Benefits Division
SUBJECT: NYSHIP General Information Book for NY Active Groups (Empire and HMO)
DATE: August 28, 2014

We are pleased to announce that a revised NYSHIP *General Information Book* (GIB) for all Active NY groups (Empire Plan and HMO) is on its way to enrollee homes and NY agencies.

A Single Book!

In a departure from past practices, this publication completely replaces all group specific General Information Books for HMO enrollees and will partially replace all group specific General Information Books/Empire Plan Certificates for Empire Plan enrollees (see attached list for specific publications that should be recycled). We believe this initiative will simplify our NYSHIP materials for both enrollees and HBAs and significantly reduce costs. Group specific versions of updated Empire Plan Certificates are under development and will be reissued in the near future. **NOTE:** The back cover of the version that is being mailed to Empire Plan enrollees instructs them to keep the new GIB with their existing General Information Book/Certificate until they receive their new group specific Empire Plan Certificate.

The *General Information Book* contains information regarding NYSHIP eligibility rules, enrollment options, requirements and costs. Provisions are generally the same for all active NY enrollee groups; however where there are exceptions the differences are called out in the text. This reissuance represents the most substantial revision to the GIB undertaken in more than a decade, so we highly recommend that all HBAs take the opportunity to review it upon receipt.

Empire Plan Certificates Update

Earlier this summer, the 2012-13 Empire Plan Certificate Amendments were posted online and rolled into the online group Certificates. Amendments for 2014 are in development and when they are posted, we will print and mail new Empire Plan Certificates by group to all active Empire Plan enrollees. Once these second publications are available, they will replace each group's existing GIB/Empire Plan Certificate and significantly streamline our fulfillment system. We will send another HBA memo to let you know when this change is occurring and include a list of Empire Plan materials that you can recycle. Future revisions to the GIB and Empire Plan Certificates will be handled separately and our intent is to stop issuing amendments in favor of revising the books instead.

Distribution

We will send you a supply of five copies for your use. This publication will begin mailing to enrollee homes in early September. Mail files were pulled from NYBEAS on August 13, 2014. Any enrollee not on the file as of that date will not receive this mailing. You may, however, order a Quick Order (QO) package on HBA Online for any new hire since it will include this publication. Otherwise, you should include a copy of the new GIB in the package of information you give to new hires, regardless of their group or plan choice (Empire Plan or HMO).

Publications that are returned due to a bad address will be returned to agencies so that you can reach out to the enrollee to correct their address on NYBEAS. Please be sure to provide a copy of the GIB to such enrollees or order one on HBA Online.

Publications Available on Our Web Site: <https://www.cs.ny.gov>

Please check our web site for new publications. We generally post publications when we sign off for printing. Go the Department of Civil Service web site at <https://www.cs.ny.gov> and choose Benefit Programs, then NYSHIP Online and select your group and plan, if prompted. Publications are available under Using Your Benefits.

Ordering Publications

You may order additional copies of the NY Actives *General Information Book* [NY0869/NY Active GIB 2014] on HBA Online under Publications & Forms. **Please wait until you receive your shipment of the new publication before you place an order.**

If you need help accessing HBA Online, please call the ITS Service Desk at 518-474-2433 and press 1 for the Department of Civil Service. Call the EBD HBA Help Line at 518-474-2780 with questions regarding benefits. If you are unsure of how to order publications or have questions about this distribution, please call the EBD Communications Unit at 518-457-7577.

Attachment