



REVISED MEMO

NY 19-28
PE 19-15

TO: New York State and Participating Employer Health Benefits Administrators
FROM: Employee Benefits Division
SUBJECT: Discontinuation of Empire BlueCross BlueShield HMO Options for 2020
DATE: October 9, 2019

This memo is to inform you that as of January 1, 2020, Empire BlueCross BlueShield (Empire BCBS) will discontinue its participation in NYSHIP. Plan options 280, 290 and 320 will no longer be available to enrollees or dependents beginning with the 2020 plan year.

The Department will be mailing separate letters to Active (NYSHIP primary) and Inactive (Medicare primary) Empire BCBS HMO enrollees notifying them that these options will be discontinued. Empire BCBS will also be mailing notification letters to their NYSHIP HMO enrollees. Enrollees who do not choose a new option for 2020 will automatically be enrolled in the Empire Plan, effective January 1, 2020.

The Active letter will inform enrollees they will need to enroll in The Empire Plan or any NYSHIP approved HMO that serves the area where they live or work during the 2020 Option Transfer Period. Requests must be processed by **December 20, 2019** to ensure no delay in benefits. The dates of the Option Transfer Period will be announced when rates are approved.

The Medicare primary letter will inform Medicare enrollees that their Option Transfer form must be received by EBD by **November 29, 2019** to enroll in the option of their choice otherwise they will be enrolled in the Empire Plan. **Note:** The November 29, 2019 date will be a firm deadline regardless of the release of the 2020 rates.

Both mailings will include the 2020 listing of NYSHIP plans by county and an appropriate enrollment form. A follow-up mailing of the Health Insurance Choices for 2020 publications (Active or Retiree) will also be sent when they are available. Affected Empire BCBS HMO enrollees are encouraged to review their 2020 plan options carefully using the Choices publication, the online 2020 Plan Comparison Tool available on NYSHIP Online (www.cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits or www.cs.ny.gov/retirees) or MyNYSHIP (<https://www.cs.ny.gov/mynyship/welcome/>), if applicable. **Note:** These resources should be available in late October/early November.