

May 8, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chapter Presidents and Legislative Coordinators

RE: Dental and Vision Care

SUMMARY: OPM has made new progress towards a dental/vision care option.

As you know, NTEU has long sought the addition of dental and vision care benefits as part of the benefit package for federal employees and retirees. In 2004 NTEU and allied organizations were successful in getting legislation enacting the first step towards this goal, namely authorization for the establishment of such a program. This first step does not include an employer contribution; however, the expectation is the large group size would enable the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to negotiate very favorable rates.

I am pleased to report that OPM has now selected the participating providers. There will be four national and three regional dental plans, along with three national vision plans. Participants need not be enrolled in FEHBP to join. Participants will have the option of enrolling in self-coverage, self plus one, or family. The enrollment period is scheduled to match the fall FEHBP open season.

At this stage, premiums have not been announced. NTEU will be watching this closely as we believe OPM must make full use of the negotiating power of the large customer base it is offering to obtain reasonable premiums for participants.

The insurance companies to offer the dental insurance are MetLife of New York; GEHA of Kansas City, MO; United Concordia of Harrisburg, PA; and Aetna of Hartford, CT. Offering national plans are GHI of New York, covering employees in and around New York City; CompBenefits of Roswell, GA; for the Southeast and Midwest; and Triple-S of San Juan, Puerto Rico; for employees there. The vision care providers will be Vision Services Plan of Sacramento, CA; Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association of Chicago; and Spectera of Baltimore.

I will keep you posted of further developments.

Colleen M. Kelley
National President