

FREE Federal Employees Retirement Planning Guide
<http://federaljobs.net/retire>

Open Season Like None Other, COLAs & More
Federal Employees Dental & Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP)
by Dennis V. Damp (retired FAA)

The “*Federal Employment Health Benefits Open Season*” starts November 13th and ends December 11th this year. We all have a lot more choices to consider now that we have the new “*Federal Employees Dental & Vision Insurance Plan*” (**FEDVIP**) options available. On top of that, retirees can look forward to a Cost of Living Adjustment this January. The CSRS COLA is set at 3.3% and FERS retirees will receive a 2.3% increase.

I spent a day or so reviewing the FEHB and the new FEDVIP plans this week and found some surprises along the way. The new FEDVIP program seems to offer fair priced packages with a good mix of benefits and you have a number of companies to choose from. Generally speaking, costs for our FEHB plans have increased overall, however a few plans did actually have reductions for 2007. My FEHB premiums will increase over 11% from \$360.86 to \$410.19 per month.

You will find all of the information you need about these plans on OPM’s web site. I also added this information and links on <http://federaljobs.net/fed.htm> in case the OPM site gets bogged down with visitors due to the new programs offered this year.

Federal Employees Dental & Vision Insurance Plan (FEDVIP)

The new “*Federal Employees Dental & Vision Insurance Plan*” (**FEDVIP**) is divided into two sections, Dental and Vision, and both have their own premium charts. You can purchase coverage for either or both plans. Thankfully Uncle Sam negotiated a three tiered premium system for “Self, Self + 1, and Family” which is a real savings for empty nesters that only have themselves and a spouse to insure. It would be nice if they also had a three tiered system for the FEHB program.

The employee or retiree must pay the full cost of the FEDVIP insurance. Uncle Sam negotiated prices and they don’t pay a part of the premiums like they do for the FEHB program. The monthly costs seem reasonable, maybe because I live in rating area #1 which offers the lowest premiums. Look over your options closely and compare plans. Also, I checked with my dentist to see which companies they accepted and I discovered they only accept three of the listed company’s plans.

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Dental & Vision Care Providers

Dental	Vision
Aetna Life Insurance Company	BlueCross BlueShield Association
Government Employees Hospital Association, Inc. (GEHA)	Spectera, Inc.
MetLife Inc.	Vision Service Plan (VSP)
United Concordia Companies, Inc.	
Group Health, Inc.	
CompBenefits	
Triple-S, Inc.	

Dental plans provide a comprehensive range of services, including but not limited to the following:

Class A (Basic) services, which include oral examinations, prophylaxis, diagnostic evaluations, sealants and x-rays.

Class B (Intermediate) services, which include restorative procedures such as fillings, prefabricated stainless steel crowns, periodontal scaling, tooth extractions, and denture adjustments.

Class C (Major) services, which include endodontic services such as root canals, periodontal services such as gingivectomy, major restorative services such as crowns, oral surgery, bridges and prosthodontic services such as complete dentures.

Class D (Orthodontic) services.

The program allows employees to use pre-tax dollars to pay for their vision and dental premiums. However, retirees can't pay the premiums with pre-tax dollars. NARFE and other organizations are working to get retirees this same benefit.

The rates are based on where you live by zip code and you have to determine your rate (1 to 5) and premium from the following OPM charts:

Rate Chart Link:

<http://opm.gov/insure/dentalvision/07DentalRatingArea.pdf>

Dental Premium Chart:

<http://opm.gov/insure/dentalvision/07Dentalrates.pdf>

I am currently considering Met Life's Standard Option. In rating area #1 the premium for my wife and I

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(Self +1) is only \$31.59 per month. The highest Met Life Standard Option cost for rating area 5 for (Self +1) is \$45.80. The coverage includes 100% Standard (A), 55% Intermediate (B), 35% Major (C) and 50% Orthodontic with a \$1,200 annual maximum benefit per person. Several plans offer no maximum benefit limits.

The **vision program** covers examinations, lenses, and frames and there is only one rate schedule for the entire country. Monthly rates are available at <http://opm.gov/insure/dentalvision/07VisionRates.pdf>.

Vision Plan Comparison

Plan	Bi-Weekly Premiums			Months Between Covered Services					
	Self	Self + One	Self and Family	Exam-ination	Lenses	Frames	Exam Copay	Lens Copay	Frame Allowance
BCBS Standard	\$3.97	\$7.94	\$11.92	12	12	24	\$0	\$0	\$130
BCBS High	\$5.01	\$10.01	\$15.02	12	12	12	\$0	\$0	\$130
Spectera Standard	\$2.63	\$5.13	\$7.64	12	12	12	\$10	\$25	\$130
Spectera High	\$3.41	\$6.65	\$9.91	12	12	12	\$10	\$10	\$130
VSP Standard	\$3.82	\$7.65	\$11.47	12	12	12	\$10	\$20	\$120
VSP High	\$5.40	\$10.81	\$16.21	12	12	12	\$10		\$150

If you have questions, please contact OPM at fedvip@opm.gov or call them at (202)606-0745.

For questions regarding the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program, please contact the customer service representatives at 1(866)639-3917.

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season 2007

Yes, retiree's did get a COLA this year and most active feds will get that or more, however our health care premiums increased substantially. In my case over 11% from last year. Retirees with annuities of \$20,000 a year or less may see their COLA increase consumed by increased health care costs. Still, we are fortunate to have comprehensive health care coverage and now dental and vision care. Many in the private sector have little to NO health insurance coverage or like several people that I know can't buy coverage because of preexisting condition clauses mandated by many insurance providers.

Thankfully there are many options for us to consider and you can shop around in most locations for price

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and coverage options that you can live with and afford.

The FEHB program brochures and premium lists are posted on the OPM web site. Use the links that follow to select the coverage available in your local area. If you received this message via my email newsletter you may have to cut and paste the web addresses into your browser. Some network administrator disable email links.

Plan Brochures: <http://opm.gov/insure/06/planinfo.asp>

Rates (Non-Postal): http://apps.opm.gov/rates/non_postal.cfm?year=2007

Postal Rates: <http://apps.opm.gov/rates/postal.cfm?year=2007>

On a personal note, I reviewed "The Fit Traveler, Senior Edition" earlier this month and it has proven to be an excellent resource and I incorporated about 70% of the exercises into my workout routines. The upper body stretch bands exercise different muscle groups and compliment my weight lifting program. I added the lower body and abdominal exercises to my pilates workout. Anyone over 50 or for that matter anyone out of shape at any age will find this book a wealth of information and a fast track to a healthier life. If you missed the book review go to <http://federaljobs.net/retire/reviews.htm>. We will review at least one book a month that I find beneficial for active and retired feds.

Tune in Saturday's "For Your Benefit" weekly retirement planning radio talk show this coming Saturday from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. EST. Visit <http://federalnewsradio.com> to tune them in live or to listen to the archived show after this date. The topic for the October 28th show is FEHB - Aetna with NITP hosts Tammy Flanagan and Ann Vincent. Visit them each Saturday to get the answers you need to your federal retirement questions. Call 1-866-895-5086 to ask questions during the show or email your questions 24/7 to foryourbenefit@nitpinc.com.

Dennis V. Damp

Retired FAA

<http://federaljobs.net> (Federal Career Center)

<http://federaljobs.net/retire> (Free Retirement Planning Guide)

<http://fedcareer.info> (Career Development Center)

<http://healthcarejobs.org> (Health Care Career Center)

<http://postofficejobs.info> (Postal Career Center)