

NEW JERSEY
SMALL EMPLOYER HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

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ADVISORY BULLETIN
98-SEH-01

January 14, 1998

To: SEH Program Member Carriers

From: Ellen F. DeRosa, Deputy Executive Director

**Re: IMPORTANT COMPLIANCE DATES for
OPTIONAL BENEFIT RIDERS**

I. Submission of Riders During 1998

As you may know, the Policy Forms Committee of the Small Employer Health Benefits Program Board (SEH Board) is responsible for the initial review of increasing value Optional Benefit Rider filings made pursuant to N.J.A.C. 11:21-3.2. The Committee makes recommendations to the SEH Board as to whether such filings are complete and in substantial compliance with relevant regulations. While the regulations give the Board 45 days in which to review the filings of optional benefit riders, the SEH Board has attempted to take action on filings during the SEH Board meeting next following receipt of the filing, resulting in responses to filings within considerably less time than the permissible 45 days. In order that the SEH Board may continue to respond as expeditiously as possible to the filings of increasing value optional benefit riders, we thought it would be helpful for you to be advised of the meeting schedule for the Policy Forms Committee and advise you of the dates by which filings must be *received* in order to be considered by the SEH Board during any given month.

**Date of Receipt in the
Offices of the SEH Program**

January 5, 1998
February 2, 1998
March 2, 1998
April 6, 1998
May 4, 1998
June 1, 1998
July 6, 1998
August 25, 1998
October 1, 1998
November 2, 1998
November 30, 1998

**Date of Next Following
SEH Board Meeting**

January 21, 1998
February 18, 1998
March 18, 1998
April 22, 1998
May 20, 1998
June 17, 1998
July 22, 1998
September 16, 1998
October 21, 1998
November 18, 1998
December 16, 1998

Optional Benefit Rider filings must be received here *no later than the specified date* in order to be considered by the Committee during the committee meeting which is scheduled to occur during the week following the receipt dates. The SEH Board will take action on the Committee's recommendations during the next following monthly SEH Board meetings. If a filing is received in the offices of the SEH Program Board after the specified receipt date, it will not be considered by the committee until the following monthly committee meeting. [Ex. If a filing is received on April 7, 1998, it will be reviewed by the committee along with the filings that are received by May 4, 1998.] Please note that the SEH Board is not scheduled to meet during the month of August. Thus, the Committee is not scheduled to meet in anticipation of an August Board meeting.

II. Previously Filed Optional Benefit Riders

The SEH Board has taken action with respect to several hundred riders since the SEH law was changed in 1994 to allow the filing of optional benefit riders. The standard policy forms have been modified several times since the first optional benefit riders were filed, and at least once since subsequent optional benefit rider filings. The SEH Board believes that a number of the previously filed optional benefit riders are no longer appropriate, given the changes to the language in the standard forms. Further, it is possible that changes made to the standard plans may have eliminated the need for a number of the previously filed optional benefit riders.

The SEH Board reminds carriers that it is their responsibility to review the text of previously filed optional benefit riders to determine whether the riders need to be re-filed in order to properly amend the standard plans as they have been modified by the SEH Board. Carriers may *not* make changes to the text of previously filed optional benefit riders without first filing the revised riders with the SEH Board. ***Riders which require revision should be re-filed with the SEH Board no later than April 1, 1998.***

If it is determined that a previously filed optional benefit rider is no longer appropriate, please notify the SEH Board, in writing, withdrawing the rider. The correspondence should specify the identifying form number of the optional benefit rider and the date the Board found the filing complete, if known. ***Notice of withdrawal of any optional benefit riders should be given no later than April 1, 1998.*** Please note that unless and until an optional benefit rider has been withdrawn, carriers must continue to offer the rider to any small employer requesting it, and must continue to file rates for the rider.

If you have any questions concerning the filing of new riders during 1998 or the manner in which previously filed riders should be treated, please feel free to contact me.