



# Florida Federation of Chapters

Marc Harris, PR Chair (239) 549-9902

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## NARFE NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **NARFE wins one for Federal employees and retirees!**

NARFE efforts obtain relief for Federal employees and retirees when OPM announces that Blue Cross/Blue Shield has revised its Standard Option Benefit provision for non-emergency surgeries performed by non-participating physicians.

#### Revised Benefit for 2009

- Enrollees pay 30% of the plan allowance subject to the yearly deductible plus the difference between the plan allowance and amount billed.
- The coinsurance is included in the annual \$7,000 limit; the difference between the allowance and billed amount is not. (Same as 2008)
- Medicare B enrollees: coinsurance is waived as provided in brochure.

#### Original Benefit for 2009 that NARFE Successfully Opposed

- Enrollees would have paid 100% of billed amount up to a maximum of \$7,500 for non-emergency/Non-accidental surgery performed by non-network Physicians.
- The \$7,500 co-payment you would have had to pay was not included under the plan's catastrophic out-of-pocket protection.
- Medicare B enrollees: copayment waived as provided in brochure.

Note: While enrollees can make a late open season change in health insurance coverage, the effective date of Open Season changes is January 1 for active employees, which is January 4 in most cases. Claims for medical services performed after these dates should be submitted to the new insurance carrier.

For retirees: Premiums in their annuities reflecting the new health insurance coverage may not show in their February 1 payments. IF their open season change was not processed by OPM before mid-January in time for February 1 payment data sent to the Treasury, the

February 1 annuity payment will show the 2009 premium for their current plan, not the plan they changed to. The new premium along with any adjustment between the old and the new premium will first show in the March 1 annuity payment.

The revised benefit is similar to the benefit BC offered in 2008, but the coinsurance increases from 25% to 30 % for 2009. The problem with coinsurance has always been not knowing what dollar amount the percentage, in the above case 30%, is applied to. To address this, Blue Cross will offer a new service next year for planned surgeries costing \$5,000 or more. Using a telephone number on the back of their ID Card, enrollees will obtain the plan's allowance amount for the surgery being scheduled. This information together with the cost of the surgery the enrollee obtains from the surgeon, provides a way enrollees can estimate their out-of-pocket costs for surgery. Blue Cross will send a letter explaining the benefit changes and updated brochure information to all their enrollees

*Note- The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) has been safeguarding and improving the earned rights and benefits of America's active and retired federal employees since 1921. NARFE represents some 5 million federal workers, retirees, spouses and their survivors.*