











Plan Changes

- ✿ Benefit changes have been made to standardize all Independent Agent Plan (IAP) plans. Changes made in July 2003 are now being implemented for January renewals.
- ✿ CommunityBlue Direct Value Plan is being discontinued, effective immediately. All existing CommunityBlue Direct Value Plan clients will be transitioned into DirectBlue Value Plan effective 1/1/04 (a letter was sent in September informing them of this change). No paperwork will be required for this transition. **NO NEW** CommunityBlue Direct Value Plans will be issued.
- ✿ Effective January 1, 2004, Direct Blue Value can co-exist with any other Highmark product. No more than 2 product options may be offered.
- ✿ ClassicBlue Comprehensive and Affordable programs are being consolidated into a single Comprehensive benefit design with a \$750 annual deductible and a \$1000 annual out of pocket. Call Sara for plan designs, or download them from the Agent Portal.
- ✿ All Benefit Grids can be downloaded from the Agent Portal, and new Underwriting Guidelines with easier-to-understand participation charts will be available in January on the website.
- ✿ Out-of-Area Comprehensive program's deductible is increasing from \$400 to \$750, with a corresponding out of pocket expense increase to \$1000.
- ✿ Pharmacy changes: Preferred Blue now includes a formulary. Preferred Blue and Direct Blue High Option offer three-tiered options. All plans are 31 day supply only through retail (previously the greater of 100 units or 34 day supply). Mail order has also been added and offers a 90 day supply for two times the retail copay.
- ✿ New Rate Grids for groups sold with a January, February or March effective date are available upon request.


Renewal Information


-  Please review your list of renewals and contact your clients ASAP. Studies have proven that business retention is based on client satisfaction, and clients are most satisfied when they are contacted by their agents often - as much as monthly. Please let us know if any of your January renewal clients were not included.
-  Renewal demographics now include an SIC code as listed with Dun & Bradstreet. Renewals include rates, average age, area and industry band based on the D&B report. Replacement/dual option quotes must be based on this information. Please note that due to system limitations the percentage of change indicated on the renewals may not be accurate.
-  **New April Rate Cycle:** In an effort to more accurately respond to market needs, the IAP will now have three renewal cycles; January, April and July. More detailed information concerning the IAP's April cycle will be sent to you in January 2004.
-  **NWPEP** as it has been known will become the April IAP. All benefits and rates will match IAP benefits and April rates. While no broker action is required in this change, some benefit changes may occur for your clients. Please refer to the new, standardized IAP benefit grids.

Billing Changes

-  Most groups have been transitioned to the new Hibar billing system. You can view the most up-to-date version of the Administrative Billing Guide on the web at: https://www.highmark.com/billing_guide/cover.html
-  Membership activity should be processed as it occurs, not at the time of the bill. The address for mailing Enrollment and Member Change Forms is Highmark Blue Cross, 120 Fifth Avenue Suite 1522, Fifth Avenue Place, Pittsburgh PA 15222, Attn: Membership.
-  Even though member activity is processed when it happens a Report of Enrollment Activity should still be filled out and sent in with the bill. To order this form call 800-450-0962.
-  Please note that with the new billing system commissions are not paid for the month unless the group is paid in full for that month.
-  Employees can get copies of claim forms, ID cards and customer service on-line under the My Blue Link portion of the Highmark website. If an employee does not have their ID card or access to a computer, the generic member service number is 800-241-5704.
-  Groups who cancel **MUST** send a cancellation letter to Highmark. Please send it to our office and we will forward it to the appropriate person at Highmark.

FYI...

 If you feel Highmark's SIC banding is incorrect for one of your clients an appeal process has been established. To appeal the assignment of an SIC code on an existing account, the SIC code must be changed with D&B, then Highmark must be notified in writing (a copy of D&B revised SIC code). Adjustments will be made if appropriate. SIC appeals are adjusted effective first of the month when the data is received.

 Small Group Master Application now asks for an Employer Identification number and the signature of the group purchaser, which eliminates the need for Agent of Record letters for new groups. Please check your current supply. The new form is # SEP-013 (R9-03) 20147.

New IAP Renewal Cycle

Effective Dates

January 2004
February 2004
March 2004
April 2004
May 2004
June 2004
July 2004
August 2004
September 2004
October 2004
November 2004
December 2004

Renewal Cycles

January
January
January
April
April
April
July
July
July
July
July
July

