



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 3, 2000

Contact: Edmund Byrnes
(202) 606-2402

Good News for Employees in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program

Washington, DC - Over 1.4 million federal employees who participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) will enjoy the benefit of premium conversion, a tax law provision that allows employees to pay their health insurance premiums on a pre-tax basis. By paying for their health benefits using pre-tax dollars, employees will see an increase in their take home pay.

"I am very happy that we now have premium conversion in place," said the Director of the US Office of Personnel Management, Janice R. Lachance. "It is something that I have been fighting for, something that will put more money in the pockets of federal employees."

Employees can calculate their tax savings by multiplying their annual FEHBP premium by the percentage they would normally pay in taxes on that amount of income. For example, a typical employee who pays \$1,736 per year for self-and-family coverage and 35.65 percent of salary in taxes will save \$619 per year, or \$23.81 every two weeks - roughly a 2 percent increase in the after-tax salary of an employee making \$50,000 a year.

"We have already seen the success premium conversion has had in the private sector," said Lachance. "This will help the federal government remain a competitive employer, and it is certainly good news to employees and their families."

Employees will see the effect of premium conversion in their paycheck for the first full pay period in October.

For more information on Premium Conversion, you may go to www.opm.gov/insure/health/pretaxfehb.

END

OPM oversees the federal work force and provides the American public with up-to-date employment information. OPM also supports U.S. agencies with personnel services and policy leadership including staffing tools, guidance on labor-management relations and programs to

OPM NEWS

R | E | L | E | A | S | E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 19, 2000

Contact: Edmund Byrnes
202-606-2402 or edbyrnes@opm.gov

President Signs Long-Term Care Bill

Washington, DC – With President Clinton's signing of the Long-Term Care Security Act during a White House ceremony, long-term care insurance will become a reality for federal workers, members of the military, retirees and their families. It is the first new benefit offered to federal employees since the inception of the Federal Employees Retirement System, with its Thrift Savings Plan component, in June 1986.

"I am thrilled that long-term care coverage will be available to the entire federal family," said U.S. Office of Personnel Management Director Janice R. Lachance. "We must do everything we can to ease the burden of caring for older relatives, and we must provide a way to plan for the years when we all will most need assistance."

OPM will use the formidable purchasing power of the 13 million eligible members of the federal family to negotiate savings of 15% to 20% on commercially available rates.

The legislation authorizes OPM to design a long-term care package that offers flexible benefit options to meet the diverse needs of the federal family. A range of services, including home health care, adult day care and nursing home care, will be covered. The program will be available to civilian and military employees, retirees, and their eligible family members.

Long-term care coverage will become available no later than October 2002.

-end-



United States
Office of
Personnel
Management

Office of
Communications

Theodore Roosevelt Building
1900 E Street, NW
Room 5F12
Washington, DC 20415-0001

(202) 606-1800
FAX: (202) 606-2264



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 23, 2000

Contact: Michael Orenstein
(202) 606-2402

OPM's *Privatization of Federal Investigations* Advances to Finalist Round of *Innovations in American Government Award*

Washington, D.C. – With the employee-owned company posting savings of \$65 million for America's taxpayers since 1996, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's *Privatization of Federal Investigations* has earned a spot as a finalist in the prestigious *Innovations in American Government Awards Program*.

The announcement of the *Privatization of Federal Investigations* as an award finalist was made today in Boston by the Ford Foundation and Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, sponsors of the award.

The privatized investigations unit now operates under the name US Investigations Service (USIS) and provides quality investigations services, at less cost. It is the first employee-owned company to be spun off from a federal program.

"This is a perfect example of how Vice President Gore's program to reinvent the federal government should work," said OPM Director Janice R. Lachance. "On behalf of everyone who worked so hard, over so many months to fashion a privatization plan that would work for our customers, the American taxpayer and the affected employees, I am delighted to learn of this news. Advancing to the round of finalists reflects mightily on the work they did to get the privatized, employee-owned investigations operation up and running."

The Office of Personnel Management successfully moved 700 highly trained and motivated employees to the US Investigations Service, Inc., an Employee Stock Ownership Plan company. All of OPM's investigations employees were offered jobs with USIS at the same or better salary and with comparable benefits. OPM retains policy and oversight control for federal agency clients.

Of the more than 300 applications received, only 25 have become finalists for the 2000 *Innovations in American Government Awards Program*. The Ford Foundation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government will announce the 10 winners on October 12.

- end -



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 28, 2000

Contact: Joe Cowart
(202) 606-1710

Congress Passes Retirement Coverage Error Correction Legislation

Washington, DC -- Federal employees who have been harmed by administrative errors affecting their retirement plan coverage will receive fair and equitable treatment thanks to legislation passed today by the U.S. Congress, according to U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director Janice R. Lachance.

"This important bill will bring long-awaited relief to thousands of federal employees and their families and I am delighted at the bipartisan spirit in which it has been enacted," Lachance said.

Most of the errors occurred in the mid-1980s when the federal government created a new retirement system while leaving the old Civil Service Retirement System in effect for most employees. More than 2.6 million employees are covered by the two plans and a hybrid plan created at the same time. While employing agencies placed the vast majority of employees in the right plan, several thousand employees, a small fraction of the total, ended up in the wrong system.

The new law, The Erroneous Retirement Coverage Corrections Act, will allow OPM to remedy these errors and ensure that employees who were placed in the wrong system for three years or more will not be harmed.

####

For more information on this topic see <http://www.opm.gov/asd/htm/2000/00-110.htm>

OPM oversees the federal work force and provides the American public with up-to-date employment information. OPM also supports U.S. agencies with personnel services and policy leadership including staffing tools, guidance on labor-management relations and programs to improve workforce performance.

Information on OPM responsibilities, programs and initiatives may be found at <http://www.opm.gov>

OPM NEWS

R | E | L | E | A | S | E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 26, 2000

CONTACT: Michael Orenstein
202-606-2402 or mworenst@opm.gov

President Clinton Acts to Hire 100,000 People with Disabilities into the Executive Branch; OPM to Oversee Program

Washington, D.C. – President Clinton today announced the federal government will be able to hire 100,000 people with disabilities and charged the U.S. Office of Personnel Management with oversight of the initiative.

The Administration's initiative, to be carried out over five years, builds upon its past success in giving people in the disabled community a stage to show they can successfully contribute in the workplace while enhancing their economic prosperity.

"It is so very important that men and women with disabilities be given every opportunity to fully participate in the unparalleled prosperity our nation has witnessed over the past seven years," said OPM Director Janice R. Lachance, the President's chief advisor on federal human resource issues. "The quality of work performed by people with disabilities -- and the full range of occupations they hold -- only serve to reinforce the Clinton-Gore Administration's commitment to do more for those who only need a chance to show what they can do for America."

The President signed an Executive Order putting the hiring plan into motion in recognition of the 10th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Under the Executive Order, each agency and department will submit to OPM for approval a blueprint detailing a comprehensive strategy for recruiting and hiring people with disabilities. Lachance has sent a memorandum to heads of executive departments and agencies, describing the information that must be contained in their plans. The blueprints must be submitted to OPM by September 25, 2000. Each blueprint will describe:

- 1) the agency's plans for recruiting and hiring qualified individuals with a disability, and provide the number of likely hires, and the occupations and grade levels of expected hires;

-more-



United States
Office of
Personnel
Management

Office of
Communications

Theodore Roosevelt Building
1900 E Street, NW
Room 5F12
Washington, DC 20415-0001

(202) 606-1800
FAX: (202) 606-2264

o the agency's plans for training, mentoring and working with new hires on career development strategies; and,

o the agency's strategy to ensure that reasonable accommodation needs are met.

OPM will track the government's progress beginning with people hired on October 1, 2000.

To achieve the Administration's hiring objective, OPM will work with agency human resources officials to make sure they are aware of all available hiring authorities. In addition, recruitment and hiring officials will expand their outreach efforts and make accommodation for people with disabilities a primary objective.

In October 1999, OPM released *Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government* and *People with Disabilities in the Federal Government: An Employment Guide*. Together, these publications offer information on hiring authorities that can be used to hire qualified people with disabilities and workplace accommodations, as well as guidance on training and promoting successful employees.

- end -



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 19, 2000

Contact: Michael Orenstein
(202) 606-2402

**FEDERAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE BECOMES MORE
AFFORDABLE**

Washington, D.C. -- Starting in October, federal employees can use pre-tax dollars to pay health insurance premiums to the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, U.S. Office of Personnel Management Director Janice R. Lachance announced today.

Lachance said that the government's new plan will let Executive Branch employees save money through premium conversion. Premium conversion uses Federal tax rules to let employees deduct their share of health insurance premiums from their taxable income thereby reducing their taxes. This plan is similar to the private sector, which has allowed their employees to deduct health insurance premiums from their taxable incomes for many years.

"I am delighted that premium conversion is being made available to federal employees. It is money in their pockets and one way to lessen the effects of rising medical costs on federal employees and their families," said Lachance. "We will continue to look for ways to make the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) more affordable, while maintaining the high service and benefits levels of a program that is consistently cited as a model employer-sponsored health plan."

Premium conversion for federal employees enrolled in the FEHBP takes effect October 1, 2000. The new rules will be published in Wednesday's Federal Register.

The method for calculating the tax savings is to multiply an employee's annual FEHBP premium by that employee's tax bracket. For example, an employee who pays \$1600 in premiums for self and family in a year and whose income places him or her in the 28 percent tax bracket and who also pays 7.65% FICA will save \$570.40.

-end-

Visit the website on this topic at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/pretaxfehb/index.htm>

United States Office of Personnel Management	Office of Communications	Theodore Roosevelt Building 1900 E Street, NW Room 5F12 Washington, DC 20415-1400	(202) 606-2402 FAX: (202) 606-2264
---	-----------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

| News Home Page | Web Site Index | OPM Home Page |

OPM NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 10, 2000

Contact: Michael Orenstein
(202) 606-2402

OPM Unveils Intern Program to Attract Top People

Washington, D.C. – Uncle Sam "really wants you."

So much so that the U.S. Office of Personnel Management today unveiled the *Federal Career Intern Program*, a program that will make the federal government a more attractive employer among "exceptional" candidates. The intern program, established by presidential Executive Order, offers participants unrivaled professional experiences and training opportunities that are tailored to meet their professional goals.

The *Federal Career Intern Program* is open to all qualified candidates, including current federal employees.

"I am very excited about this program," said OPM Director Janice R. Lachance. "The *Federal Career Intern Program* will serve as a launch vehicle that delivers job seekers and current federal employees to their ultimate professional destinations, whatever and wherever they might be. By helping people meet their professional goals, the word will spread that government lives up to its commitment to help people reach their potential. In doing so, we will make federal public service a career of choice."

Lachance is equally optimistic about the impact of the career intern program on agency services. "The *Federal Career Intern Program* will serve as a valuable recruitment tool because it will help agencies maintain a steady stream of qualified employees in diverse occupations who are ready to advance and assume greater roles," said Lachance. "Ultimately, you, I and all taxpayers will be rewarded with better services."

Individuals hired into the program will occupy positions that are classified as either professional, administrative or technical in nature. Interns will receive excepted-service appointments for up to two years at grades GS-5 through GS-9. With OPM's approval, appointments may be extended for up to one additional year.

Agencies will use OPM's advice and guidance to design a program that best suits their occupational needs, including the formal two-year training component. Employees who successfully complete the internship are eligible for non-competitive conversion to the competitive civil service.

According to President Clinton's Executive Order signed on July 7, 2000, the *Federal Career Intern Program* has been designed to attract "exceptional men and women to the federal work force who have a variety of experiences, academic disciplines and competencies, and to prepare them for careers in the analysis and execution of public programs."

The Executive Order provides for the application of veterans' preference criteria and charges OPM with developing appropriate merit-based procedures for recruiting, screening, placing and continuing career development of *Federal Career Intern Program* participants.

- end -

United States Office of Personnel Management	Office of Communications	Theodore Roosevelt Building 1900 E Street, NW Room 5F12 Washington, DC 20415-1400	(202) 606-2402 FAX: (202) 606-2264
---	-----------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

[News Home Page](#) | [Web Site Index](#) | [OPM Home Page](#)

Web page created 17 July 2000



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 23, 2000

CONTACT: Sharon J. Wells
202-606-2402

OPM PROPOSES REGULATIONS ALLOWING FEDERAL AGENCIES TO REPAY STUDENT LOANS

Washington, D.C.--The US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has proposed regulations that would authorize Federal agencies to repay student loans as a recruitment or retention incentive for candidates and current employees.

"In today's highly competitive labor market, federal agencies need a wide variety of tools to help them recruit and retain the best and brightest candidates," said OPM Director Janice R. Lachance. "This incentive will be a tremendous boost to the Federal government's battle to win the war for talent."

The loan repayment authority is one of several flexibilities agencies may use when trying to attract individuals to federal service or retain employees for whom the government has a special need.

Repayments from an agency to an individual employee may not exceed \$6,000 in a calendar year, and \$40,000 total. An employee who receives repayment benefits must agree to remain with the agency for at least three years. The proposed regulations allow the head of each agency to establish an internal plan to review and approve loan repayments.

This authority can be used to repay student loans covered by the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Public Health Service Act.

The proposed rules were published in the Federal Register on June 22, 2000.

End

United States Office of Personnel Management	Office of Communications	Theodore Roosevelt Building 1900 E Street, NW Room 5F12 Washington, DC 20415-1400	(202) 606-2402 FAX: (202) 606-2264
---	-----------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

| [News Home Page](#) | [Web Site Index](#) | [OPM Home Page](#) |

Web page created 23 June 2000

OPM NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 12, 2000

CONTACT: Michael Orenstein
202-606-2402 or
mworenst@opm.gov

OPM Expands Sick-Leave Benefits So Employees Can Provide Extended Care for Seriously Ill Family Members

Washington, D.C. – Expanded leave benefits for federal employees lets them use up to 12 weeks of earned sick leave to provide care to a family member with a serious health condition, according to U.S. Office of Personnel Management Director Janice R. Lachance. President Clinton announced the new leave policy during his June 10 Saturday radio address, calling it an employee benefit "every company in America" should consider.

Lachance said the new benefit is valuable for its ability to help employees both at work and home.

"Giving employees the opportunity to use more of their earned sick leave to care for loved ones with a serious health condition is the latest example of the Clinton-Gore Administration's and OPM's efforts to make the federal government a model employer and an employer of first choice," said Lachance. "This benefit eliminates a significant barrier to caring for a family member with a serious health condition."

The new policy, which is part of the White House initiative on family-friendly programs in the federal workplace, becomes effective June 20, 2000. Regulations implementing the sick-leave policy appear in tomorrow's Federal Register.

President Clinton last year instructed OPM to follow the lead of other economically advanced countries that offer a broad mix of programs to support employees facing extended family-care responsibilities.

Said Lachance: "To help us sustain the gains in quality service delivery made possible through the enormous contributions of our federal work force, we must adopt a compassionate mix of human resource policies. By embracing an improved 'time-off' policy for employees who become care-givers for family members struck by serious illness, we will reinforce the bond between 'dedicated employee' and 'caring employer,' thereby helping ensure better futures for both."

Under previous regulations, federal employees could use from five days to 13 days of accrued sick leave to provide care for family members or for bereavement purposes. However, the results of a 1997 survey conducted by OPM noted concerns that the 13-day limitation was inadequate for employees dealing with the long-term illnesses of family members.

Extending leave benefits for the care of others is another of the Clinton-Gore Administration's initiatives to make the workplace more family-friendly and the government a model employer. Examples of other family-friendly workplace initiatives begun or given greater support since 1993 include the expansion of alternative work schedules, the opening of satellite work sites, an emphasis on telecommuting and programs to reduce home and workplace violence.

- end -

United States	Office of	Theodore Roosevelt Building	(202) 606-2402
Office of	Communications	1900 E Street, NW	FAX: (202) 606-2264
Personnel		Room 5F12	
Management		Washington, DC 20415-1400	

[News Home Page](#) | [Web Site Index](#) | [OPM Home Page](#) |

Web page created 12 June 2000



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 14, 2000

CONTACT: Cathy McDermott
202-606-0132 or cmcderm@opm.gov

OPM Director Announces New Regulations to Implement Ground-Breaking Child Care Legislation

Washington, D. C. –The U.S. Office of Personnel Management today released final regulations to implement legislation to help lower income Federal employees with their child care costs. For the first time, Federal agencies can use appropriated funds to help lower income Federal employees with the costs of child care in licensed child care centers and family child care homes. OPM's regulations cover children up through age 13 as well as children with disabilities up through age 18.

The cost of child care for some families can reach as high as 50% of their gross annual income making affordable, quality child care out of reach. "With national child care costs ranging from \$4,000 to \$7,000 per year for preschoolers and from \$8,000 to \$14,000 for infants, most lower income Federal employees cannot utilize quality, safe child care for their children. This legislation addresses this great need," said OPM Director Janice R. Lachance. "This new legislation can result in better child care choices for Federal families. It can also help our employees achieve better work/life balance and increase their productivity on the job."

Federal agencies, labor organizations and child care providers contributed valuable information and insights for crafting the child care regulations. The National Treasury Employees Union led the way by successfully negotiating child care subsidy agreements with components of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Internal Revenue Service.

The final regulation and OPM's guide for implementing the child care legislation are available on OPM's web site, www.opm.gov.

- end -

United States Office of Personnel Management	Office of Communications	Theodore Roosevelt Building 1900 E Street, NW Room 5F12 Washington, DC 20415-0001	(202) 606-2402 FAX: (202) 606-2264
---	-----------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

[| News Home Page](#) | [| Web Site Index](#) | [| OPM Home Page](#) |

Web page created 14 March 200014

OPM NEWS

R | E | L | E | A | S | E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 8, 2000

CONTACT: Michael Orenstein
202-606-2402 or mworenst@opm.gov

Statement of Director Janice R. Lachance on Prohibiting Discrimination in Federal Employment Based on Genetic Information

"President Clinton today issued an important Executive Order that ensures the rights of federal employees and federal job seekers against employment discrimination as a result of analyses of their 'protected genetic information'. In issuing this landmark order, the President has protected the medical privacy rights of 1.8 million men and women and reinforced the principle that a person's employment with the federal government will be based solely on merit.

"With the President's action, federal employees and job applicants can benefit from the scientific community's expanding knowledge base in genetic testing, but without concern that information derived from genetic testing will adversely affect their employment status.

"And just as employment decisions will not be influenced by genetics testing, so too will there be no influence by genetics on the enrollment opportunities or care and treatment options for the nine million men, women and children covered by the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program."

###

Janice R. Lachance is the Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

As Director of the federal government's lead human resources agency, Lachance serves as the chief advisor to the White House on federal HR issues, including personnel practices under the system of merit principles, recruiting and retaining a qualified and diverse federal work force, health and retirement benefits, training, labor and management relations, and the Senior Executive Service.



United States
Office of
Personnel
Management

Office of
Communications

Theodore Roosevelt Building
1900 E Street, NW
Room 5F12
Washington, DC 20415-0001

(202) 606-1800
FAX: (202) 606-2264

OPM NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 19, 1999

CONTACT: Michael Orenstein
(202) 606-2402
mworenst@opm.gov

OPM's First-Ever Plan Increases Employment, Career Opportunities for People with Disabilities in the Federal Workforce

Washington, D.C. – To ensure that every American has the opportunity to work to their full potential, President Clinton directed federal agencies to implement the first-ever plan and companion guide to assist them in the recruitment and promotion of people with disabilities. The President released the plan and guide, developed by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, during his Saturday radio address.

"In spite of the good economic news, there are people in places still not touched by our prosperity," said President Clinton. "Among them are almost three out of four Americans with severe disabilities who want to work, but aren't working. This is not just a missed opportunity for them, it's a missed opportunity for all the rest of us, too."

"I am calling on our federal human resources agency, the Office of Personnel Management, to ensure that every agency gets the help it needs to fulfill these commitments," continued the President. "We are the nation's largest employer. I want it to be a model for private industry, and this plan will help to do just that."

Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government is OPM's response to recommendations from President Clinton's Task Force on the Employment of Adults with Disabilities. In December 1998, Vice President

Al Gore charged OPM with developing a comprehensive and workable plan to boost the economic prosperity of the disabled community by making federal employment a reality for greater numbers of people with disabilities.

"I am confident that the leadership of the Clinton/Gore Administration, where the focus is on 'inclusion', will result in real change and real opportunity for many, many more deserving Americans," said OPM Director Janice R. Lachance. "A disability does not reduce the potential or drive of the individual."

OPM's action plan directs federal agencies to:

- Recruit widely for positions at all levels of the federal workforce.
- Provide opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in internship and

student employment programs.

- Give full consideration to employees with disabilities for inclusion in developmental opportunities.
- Collect and maintain data to monitor success.
- Provide reasonable accommodations for qualified applicants and employees with disabilities, consistent with guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The President also released *People with Disabilities in the Federal Government: An Employment Guide* is a tool kit for human resource professionals to use as they recruit, hire, train and promote people with disabilities. Chapters feature information on hiring options agencies can use to employ people with disabilities, including disabled veterans; integrating people with disabilities into the workforce; and, accommodating the workplace to meet the needs of people with various disabilities.

In September 1998, people with disabilities comprised 7.1 percent of a downsized federal workforce that totaled 1.8 million employees. A decade earlier, employees with disabilities totaled 6.5 percent of the work force. In fiscal year 1998, the federal government hired approximately 13,000 men and women with disabilities.

"The federal government is committed to opening its doors wide -- to provide access into our buildings and into our national programs -- so that each individual can use his or her talents in ways that make a positive difference to America," said Lachance.

Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government and *People with Disabilities in the Federal Government: An Employment Guide* can be accessed on OPM's web page at www.opm.gov/employ/disabilities/index.htm.

- end -

United States Office of Personnel Management	Office of Communications	Theodore Roosevelt Building 1900 E Street, NW Room 5F12 Washington, DC 20415-0001	(202) 606-2402 FAX: (202) 606-2264
---	-----------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

| [News Home Page](#) | [Web Site Index](#) | [OPM Home Page](#) |

Web page created 20 October 1999

OPM NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12, 1999

CONTACT: Ivonne Cuñarro
(202) 606-2402
icunarra@opm.gov**OPM Director Announces Hispanic Employment Initiative Is Making Headway In the Federal Workforce**

CORPUS CHRISTI – U.S. Office of Personnel Management Director Janice R. Lachance today announced that the agency's Hispanic Employment Initiative is making steady progress in improving Hispanic representation in the federal workforce. As a result of OPM's Hispanic Employment Initiative Hispanic representation in the federal workforce has increased by 2,000 Hispanic employees in a little more than a year ago.

Lachance spoke before hundreds of participants at the National Convention of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) -- the largest and oldest Hispanic organization in the nation -- in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Since OPM's 9-point Hispanic Employment Initiative was launched in September of 1997, the representation of Hispanics in the federal government has increased from 99,064 in September of 1997 to 101,124 employees this March.

Moreover, Hispanic representation in the Senior Executive Service has doubled under President Clinton and Vice President Gore's leadership, from 1.4 percent of all SES employees in 1993 to 2.8 percent this March. It has increased by 30 employees in only six months, from September of 1998 to March this year.

In addition, as a result of OPM's internal 10-point plan which was launched last fall to improve the representation of Hispanics at the agency, this year's hiring of Hispanic applicants has increased to an average of 10 percent of all hires at OPM. The government-wide 9-point plan and the agency's 10-point plan have provided federal agencies with models to improve the representation of Hispanics in the federal workforce.

"We need to continue the course, grasp the momentum to achieve full representation of Hispanics in the federal government," Lachance said.

Since the implementation of OPM's 10-point plan, 85 percent of all OPM job vacancy announcements were posted on OPM's website, at www.usajobs.opm.gov, which provided individuals, with or without federal employment status, with the opportunity to apply for these jobs. This is a significant increase from 35 percent in FY 98.

Although Hispanic representation is improving steadily, Hispanics continue to be the only minority group that is underrepresented in the federal government. Currently, Hispanics

represent 6.4 percent of the federal workforce, but they comprise 10.8 percent of the civilian labor force.

"My commitment is to fulfill President Clinton's and Vice President Gore's vision to create a government that looks like America by achieving a fully diverse workforce," Lachance added.

At the convention, Director Lachance will sign a historic partnership agreement with LULAC President Rick Dovalina. The agreement strengthens OPM's and LULAC's commitment to work together to support and improve employment and career development opportunities for Hispanics at all levels of the federal workforce.

The partnership builds on prior agreements with Hispanic organizations, including OPM's partnership with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to provide Hispanic students with the opportunity to gain work experience in the federal government through paid internships.

Director Lachance also announced that she has made a commitment to sponsor job information/touch screen computer kiosks to ensure that 20 percent of all Hispanic Serving Institutions have kiosks placed at their institutions. The initiative is part of the government-wide Hispanic Employment Initiative. The touch screen computers provide easy access to information on over 10,000 job vacancies in the federal government at any given time. Currently, the kiosks are placed at 27 HACU member locations, including Texas A & M University in Corpus Christi.

The Director announced that the agency will develop a guide on how to retain and promote Hispanics in the federal workforce.

"To ensure the success of the Hispanic Employment Initiative, we need to focus on hiring, retention, training and promotion of Hispanic employees, especially from mid-level to senior level positions in government," Lachance concluded.

- () -

United States	Office of	Theodore Roosevelt Building	(202) 606-2402
Office of	Communications	1900 E Street, NW	FAX: (202) 606-2264
Personnel		Room 5F12	
Management		Washington, DC 20415-0001	

[| Back Home Page |](#) [Web Site Index |](#) [OPM Home Page |](#)

Web Page Created 14 July 1999

OPM NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 24, 1999

CONTACT: Ivonne Cuñarré
(202) 606-2402
icunarr@opm.gov

OPM Issues Guidance on Handling Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation

Washington, D.C. -- The Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Janice R. Lachance, unveiled a new guide to help federal employees who believe they have been discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. "Prejudice against **any** group is intolerable, and it certainly shouldn't be tolerated in the workplace," said Lachance.

The guide, entitled *Addressing Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Federal Civilian Employment: A Guide to Employees' Rights*, comes in response to President Clinton's historic executive order prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in the federal civilian workplace.

"Employees should not feel helpless when they believe they are being discriminated against, especially when all they are trying to do is their job," said Lachance.

While the *Guide* outlines avenues for addressing discrimination in the federal workplace, it does **not** create any new enforcement rights, such as the ability to file a grievance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The *Guide* references four avenues for those federal employees or applicants seeking help, including: the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Office of Special Counsel, the Negotiated Grievance Procedure, and the Agency Grievance Procedure. It also outlines the procedures to follow when seeking guidance.

The *Guide* may be accessed at www.opm.gov.

-end-

United States Office of Personnel Management	Office of Communications	Theodore Roosevelt Building 1900 E Street, NW Room 5F12 Washington, DC 20415-0001	(202) 606-2402 FAX: (202) 606-2264
---	-----------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

| [News Home Page](#) | [Web Site Index](#) | [OPM Home Page](#) |

Web page created 24 June 1999



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 7, 1999

CONTACT: Edmund Byrnes
(202) 606-2402
edbyrnes@opm.gov

WHITE HOUSE DIRECTS OPM TO ACHIEVE MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE HEALTH COVERAGE PARITY

Washington, DC -- President Clinton, in his address today at the White House Conference on Mental Health, directed the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to achieve parity for mental health and substance abuse coverage in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) by 2001.

"I believe that OPM, in cooperation with these health plans, can demonstrate that mental health and substance abuse parity can be achieved at an affordable price," said Clinton. "The goal is to make plan coverage for mental health and substance abuse care identical to traditional medical care with regard to deductibles, coinsurance, copayments, and day and visit limitations."

In response, OPM Director Janice R. Lachance issued a letter to over 285 participating health plans enlisting their support. The FEHBP is by far the largest employer-sponsored health insurance program in the country, covering about 9 million people including federal employees, retirees and their families.

"Affordable and fair health care coverage is vital for those suffering physically or mentally," said Lachance. "OPM will work with the health plans to introduce managed behavioral health care components that incorporate proven techniques such as case management, authorized treatment plans, provider networks using effective screening and referral procedures, pre-certification and disease management."

Because of its size and the large number of participating health plans, the President noted, that the FEHBP is in a unique position to serve as a model for other employers and for the insurance industry.

Over the past several years, the FEHBP has been moving toward mental health and substance abuse parity.

OPM has eliminated lifetime and annual maximums in the Program, and negotiated with plans to move away from contractual day and visit limitations and high deductibles, copayments, and coinsurance for mental health coverage. For 1999, pharmacotherapy, medical visits and testing to monitor drug treatment for mental conditions were covered as pharmaceutical disease management.

Given recent advances in treatment and related factors, the President is confident that parity in the Government's health insurance program for federal employees, retirees and their families can be achieved affordably through appropriate care management.

-END-

United States Office of Personnel Management	Office of Communications	Theodore Roosevelt Building 1900 E Street, NW Room 5F12 Washington, DC 20415-0001	(202) 606-2402 FAX: (202) 606-2264
---	-----------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

[| News Home Page](#) | [Web Site Index](#) | [OEM Home Page](#) |

Web page updated 15 June 1999

OPM NEWS

R | E | L | E | A | S | E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 9, 1998

CONTACT: Michael Orenstein
202-606-1800 or mworenst@opm.gov

OPM Makes Life Easier for People Pondering Health Care Open Season Choices

Washington, D.C. -- Federal employees and retirees pondering which health care plan best suits their needs are getting extra help from the Office of Personnel Management during the November 9 to December 14 Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) open season.

"The hallmarks of the federal health care program are quality and choice," said OPM Director Janice R. Lachance. "We are leading the nation in complying with the President's Patients' Bill of Rights, which improves both quality and choice. And we're improving customer service and choice through a pilot program that helps federal enrollees decide which health care plan best meets their needs."

The pilot program on the Internet -- PlanSmartChoice -- gives employees and retirees living in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Washington, D.C. access to an on-line health plan comparison tool at OPM's FEHBP web page. About 625,000 employees and retirees live in the pilot areas.

"Selecting a health plan is a very personal matter, and decisions are based on factors unique to the individual or family," Lachance said. "PlanSmartChoice allows enrollees to compare plans on the basis of what is most important to them."

Because it is a pilot program, PlanSmartChoice's evaluations are available only on Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) that operate in these five areas. However, there are 13 fee-for-service plans offered through FEHBP whose boundaries stretch beyond these areas, and federal enrollees nationwide can evaluate the fee-for-service plans with PlanSmartChoice.

The internet address for accessing PlanSmartChoice is www.opm.gov/insure. Look for the 1999 plan information and click on *Help Me Choose a Health Plan*.

After accessing the site, employees identify plans available to them by keying in their zip codes and completing a brief profile. Employees then fill in their individual preferences.

--more--



United States
Office of
Personnel
Management

Office of
Communications

Theodore Roosevelt Building
1900 E Street, NW
Room 5F12
Washington, DC 20415-0001

(202) 606-1800
FAX: (202) 606-2264

Comparative information provided to PlanSmartChoice users includes medical benefit features, customer satisfaction ratings, accreditation status, size of the provider care network, and cost.

PlanSmartChoice users will encounter a menu of factors used in the evaluation process. They select their preference between two parameters of medical services and features. For example, one question asks the user's preference between a health plan that has no annual deductible and offers no dental care coverage, or one that has an annual deductible of \$150 but covers a variety of dental procedures. This and other preferences are cross-referenced and weighed. PlanSmartChoice then presents the plans that best fit the user's choices.

Other information provided includes satisfaction data from health plan members, health plan comparisons, and a glossary of terms.

"We're paying so much attention to consumer information because that is a cornerstone of the President's Patients' Bill of Rights," Lachance said. "The President's Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry, as well as his Patients' Bill of Rights, stress that we need to 'strengthen the hand of consumers'. Education and information are critical if our employees are going to make sound health care decisions. Sound health care decisions must be based on more than rates and your best friend's recommendation.

"As an employer, we must make sure that those participating in our health insurance program have a wide and full variety of information that lets them make informed choices. PlanSmartChoice helps do that."

PlanSmartChoice was developed through a grant from the Agency for Health Care Policy & Research, Department of Health and Human Services. The pilot is presented by OPM and the National Institute of Health (NIH).

-- end --



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, Nov. 2, 1998

CONTACT: Bruce John Milhans
(202) 606-1800
bjmilhan@opm.gov

**Vice President Gore Reports to President:
Federal Employees Health Benefits Program Complies with Patients' Bill of Rights**

Washington, D.C. -- In the East Room of the White House today, President Bill Clinton unveiled a report from Vice President Al Gore that detailed how the federal government has complied with provisions of the President's Patients' Bill of Rights.

"The Patients' Bill of Rights applies to almost 9 million people covered by the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, and at a cost of less than a quarter per enrollee per year," said Office of Personnel Management Director Janice R. Lachance. "It is difficult to understand why the humane, common-sense and economical provisions that the President has provided for federal employees are not being made available to all Americans."

Vice President Gore's report documents that the 285 health plans participating in FEHBP in 1999 -- which together cover nearly nine million federal employees, retirees and their dependents -- will implement new patient protections.

In February, the President directed Medicare, Medicaid, the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Defense Military Health Program, and the Veteran's Health Program -- which together serve over 85 million Americans -- to, where possible, come into compliance with the Patients' Bill of Rights as outlined by the President's Quality Commission. Today, the Vice President released a report highlighting that these agencies have taken all the action within their statutory authority to implement patient protections. As a result, the federal health plans are now, or soon will be, in virtual compliance with the patients' bill of rights.

OPM has specifically requested that plans implement new protections including access to specialists, continuity of care, disclosure of financial incentives, and access to emergency room services. Finally, OPM has issued new regulations to prevent "gag clauses." OPM is also sending information to beneficiaries to assure they are fully aware of their new patient protections.

--end--

Note to reporters: copies of the OPM report to the Vice President are available from the Office of Communications at 202-606-1800.

United States Office of Personnel Management	Office of Communications	Theodore Roosevelt Building 1900 E Street, NW Room 5F12 Washington, DC 20415-0001	(202) 606-1800 FAX: (202) 606-2264
---	-----------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

OPM NEWS

R | E | L | E | A | S | E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 3, 1998

CONTACT: Mary Ann Maloney
(202) 606-1800 or mamalone@opm.gov

OPM WILL RECEIVE THE 1998 OPTIMAS AWARD FOR SUCCESSFULLY MANAGING CHANGE

Washington, D.C. -- The U.S. Office of Personnel Management will beat Hollywood's brightest stars to the awards this year.

The federal human resource agency, led by OPM Director Janice R. Lachance, will be one of 10 recipients of the 1998 Optimas Award. The award is given annually by Workforce Magazine (formerly Personnel Journal) to recognize outstanding achievements in human resources management.

Director Lachance will accept the award at an 8 p.m. ceremony on Thursday, March 5, 1998, at the Beverly Hills Hotel. "I am honored that OPM has been selected to receive the Optimas Award for its work in reinventing government," said Director Lachance. "In the past four years, OPM cut its own workforce in half, crystallized its mission and completed a major redesign to focus on customer service and producing top quality results. Today, as we face the new millennium, OPM stands ready to help agencies prepare for the human resource challenges ahead."

Workforce Magazine describes the Optimas Award as "more than acknowledgment of a job well done, more than recognition of something very special. It's really a celebration of the gains made by HR--and in HR-- since the Optimas' conception in 1991.... They are examples of the heights HR can scale when released from the binds of administrivia and allowed to be forward-thinking, challenging and creative."

Over the past seven years the award has been given to such innovative companies as Ben & Jerry's Homemade Inc., Texas Instruments, Saturn Corp., UPS, Levi Strauss & Co., and McDonald's Corp.

In selecting the agency for the award, Allan Halcrow, Editor-in-Chief of Workforce Magazine said "OPM is being recognized in the Managing Change category for an array of innovative, bottom-line labor management initiatives." The agency was recognized for establishing a humane model for downsizing government and providing successful outplacement that has guided other agencies, and for pioneering privatization with the federal government's first Employee Stock Ownership Plan.

-END-



United States
Office of
Personnel
Management

Office of
Communications

Theodore Roosevelt Building
1900 E Street, NW
Room 5F12
Washington, DC 20415-0001

(202) 606-1800
FAX: (202) 606-2264

OPM NEWS

R | E | L | E | A | S | E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 29, 1997

CONTACT: Bruce J. Milhans
202-606-1800 or bjmilhan@opm.gov

OPM INVESTIGATIONS PRIVATIZATION TRIPLES FIRST SAVINGS PROJECTION

Washington, D.C. -- First, they said it couldn't be done.

Then, they said it couldn't be done right.

But a little more than one year after the U.S. Office of Personnel Management privatized its investigations service, that single reinvention of government initiative is on track to save taxpayers three times the \$20-25 million over five years initially projected by a cost-benefit analysis conducted by the private firm Kormendy/Gardner Partners.

In July 1996, OPM created US Investigations Services (USIS), Inc., an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), to do the background investigations work it provides to other Executive Branch agencies.

"We knew this was the right thing to do for the public and the federal employees involved, and I'm pleased that we are doing even better than predicted," stated Janice Lachance, Acting Director of OPM. "The fact is that in the first 15 months of privatized operation, we produced about \$20 million that otherwise would have been lost to America's taxpayers."

About \$14 million in annualized savings was generated in two main categories:

\$10.4 million in new tax revenues: The company paid \$10.4 million in federal and state income taxes, revenue which did not exist when the investigations operation and its employees were wholly federal.

\$3.5 million in savings on personnel costs: Taxpayers saved \$1.5 million in pension costs that the former federally-employed investigators and administrators are no longer paid from tax revenues. The government also did not have to provide \$300,000 in contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan, the federal counterpart of a 401(k) plan; \$900,000 in FICA costs, and \$800,000 in federal personnel cost of living increases that were avoided by the privatization.

--more--



United States
Office of
Personnel
Management

Office of
Communications

Theodore Roosevelt Building
1900 E Street, NW
Room 5F12
Washington, DC 20415-0001

(202) 606-1800
FAX: (202) 606-2264

And, in the second year of the contract, additional savings emerged:

- **\$6.5 million in lower costs to government agencies.**

OPM's three-year contract with USIS, Inc. required a cut in the price of OPM's highest level investigation of about 9 percent. USIS, Inc. doubled the reduction, allowing OPM to pass on savings to its customers agencies of more than \$1 million annually. The contract also calls for an annual cost increase equal to the cost of inflation (up to three percent), which USIS, Inc. declined to take for the coming year and rolled-back for the first year, saving an additional \$.9 million. In addition, reductions generated by new investigative standards ordered by the President in 1995 allowed OPM to develop new products which are projected to save OPM's customers another \$4.6 million annually.

"At this point, the public benefits of the contract are worth about \$20 million. That's a strong indication that the five-year savings to the taxpayer will go significantly beyond what was projected," Lachance said. "We have met the three goals we set out in undertaking the employee stock ownership privatization plan. We provided a seamless transition of service to federal agencies, saved taxpayer money, and compassionately separated employees from the federal workforce to private-sector jobs with similar pay and benefits. This is further proof that we can create a government that works better and costs less."

--end--

OPM NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 11, 1997

CONTACT: Debra Danforth
(202) 606-1800
dddanfor@opm.gov

OPM Surveys Say Civil Service Retirees Satisfied with Quality of Service

Washington, DC--Civil Service retirees give the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) an overall approval rating of 92 percent for the quality of service they receive from the agency, according to the agency's 1996 client satisfaction survey, and 98 percent say they receive their annuity payments on the date they are due.

In a second survey, federal retirees and survivors say they are satisfied with the service they receive through the Annuitant Express System, OPM's computer-based, self-service, telephone system to make changes to income tax withholdings, request statements of benefits paid for tax purposes, and make Open Season health benefit enrollment changes. Users can call the Annuitant Express System toll-free, 24-hours-a-day at 1 (800) 409-6528.

OPM administers both major federal retirement plans, the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), which cover most federal employees and surviving family members - a customer base of over two million. Civil service retirees and survivors have consistently given the agency high ratings for quality of service since the agency began conducting the surveys in 1990. Survey results were first developed in 1991. No survey was conducted for 1992.

OPM Director Jim King said, "From these surveys, we have quantifiable achievements in how we meet our customers' needs. In response to the President's call for a customer-oriented government, we are using new approaches and technology to better serve people. For example, we can begin payments to a retiring employee in one day based on a magnetic tape submission from his or her agency."

The 1996 client satisfaction questionnaire was sent to a random sample of annuitants who did business with the agency in the period from January 1 through April 30, 1996. The findings have a margin of error of plus or minus five percent.

The Annuitant Express Survey is on-going for

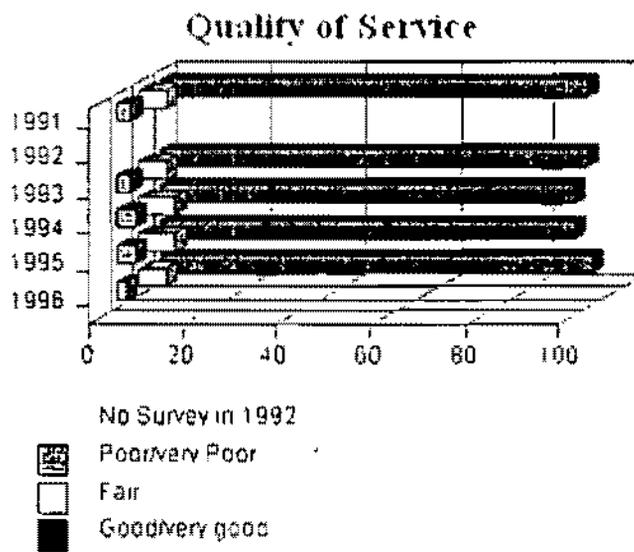


Figure 1

those who use the self-service system. The results for this report reflect responses received from January 25 through September 27, 1996, when over 280 thousand calls were handled by the system and over 90 thousand users responded to the survey questions.

Topics covered by the satisfaction survey include OPM's handling of correspondence, telephone inquiries, and claim processing. It also asked new retirees about the extent and quality of pre-retirement counseling they received from their employing agencies. In response to the survey, retirees and survivors provided the five service elements most important to them, as follows:

- concern for me and my problems
- knowledgeable OPM employees
- timely payments
- timely actions on my concerns and complaints
- accurate answers to questions.

While retirees and survivors are generally satisfied with the quality of service they receive from OPM and the level of that satisfaction has increased since the surveys began, the responses also indicate that improvements in some specific areas are needed. Improvements were recommended in the agency's responses to correspondence and telephone accessibility. And, although the level of satisfaction is high, at 84 percent, with the assistance the agency provides to those claiming death benefits, the level of satisfaction declined from last year. OPM will focus on improving service in areas indicated necessary by the surveys.

The Annuitant Express System is an element of the agency's actions to improve service through technology. In the future, OPM plans to add functions to the system's self-service menu, such as form requests, allotments, and verification of income, among other upgrades.

END

United States Office of Personnel Management	Office of Communications	Theodore Roosevelt Building 1900 E Street, NW Room 5F12 Washington, DC 20413-0001	(202) 606-1800 FAX: (202) 606-2264
---	-----------------------------	--	---------------------------------------



[Go OPM Home Page](#)

Web page created 12 Feb 1997

OPM NEWS

R | E | L | E | A | S | E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 8, 1996

CONTACT: Michael Orenstein
202-606-1800

BUTLER COUNTY--HOME TO LARGEST NATIONAL BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS COMPANY--BENEFITS FROM TRANSFER OF FEDERAL JOBS TO NEWLY-CREATED, PRIVATE COMPANY; OTHER COUNTIES WELCOME NEWS

Washington, D.C. -- The local economies of Butler County, PA, and its neighboring counties are benefitting by approximately \$12 million with the transfer of responsibility for conducting background investigations from the Office of Personnel Management to the newly-created US Investigations Services, Inc., an employee-owned company headquartered in Boyers (Butler County), PA. While the transfer is a plus for local areas, it also has positive implications for U.S. taxpayers.

US Investigations Services, Inc. (USIS, Inc.) officially assumed many of the duties of the OPM investigations function on July 7, 1996.

Federal agencies across the country will contract for USIS to conduct background investigations on new employees who require security clearance. USIS also will conduct periodic security reviews of current federal employees.

Throughout the course of studies and congressional hearings, OPM had made it clear to Members of Congress and to its customers that the same high standards of integrity and quality set at OPM would be maintained by USIS. OPM will oversee and retain policy, security and quality control over USIS, while the employee-owned company will inherit operational responsibilities.

Establishment of the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) enables approximately 240 former OPM employees to remain employed in Butler County by a private company. As part of the program, USIS agreed to make job offers at the same pay and comparable benefits to all displaced employees of the federal operation. Of the 706 employees who received a layoff notice, 681 accepted the USIS job offer.

-More-



United States
Office of
Personnel
Management

Office of
Communications

Theodore Roosevelt Building
1900 E Street, NW
Room 5F12
Washington, DC 20415-0001

(202) 606-1800
FAX: (202) 606-2264

"This is the first time the federal government has created an ESOP, and I am delighted we are able to provide jobs to our people and offer stability to the local area affected," said OPM Director Jim King. "Our goal throughout the process was to take the action that would not only reduce the number of federal employees and save taxpayers money, but cause the least amount of financial hardship and disruption to our employees and their families."

The workforce of the investigations operation, which includes case adjudicators, reviewers and data entry operators, drew an aggregate annual salary of roughly \$6 million in 1995. Each employee of USIS will earn a salary equal to that paid while on the federal payroll. As such, employees of the newly-formed company will retain substantial spending power and continue their patronage of small- and medium-sized businesses in Butler and neighboring counties. In addition, USIS employees will receive private benefits comparable to those at the federal level, including a retirement program that is not financed directly by taxpayers.

Local businesses will get an additional boost from USIS which expects to acquire goods and services worth \$6 million annually. Spending by USIS, as well as its employment base, likely will increase steadily as it ventures into business agreements that had been off-limits to its federal predecessor.

The Investigations Service of the Office of Personnel Management had been targeted for elimination. To save the jobs of the Boyers' workforce and of Investigations Service employees across the country, OPM Director Jim King ordered a feasibility study and other actions to determine the potential for success of a private investigations company. With the verdict being a high likelihood of success and with the ultimate transfer of function to USIS, OPM and the Clinton Administration have followed through on their commitment to help employees make a successful transition from the federal government to the private sector.

Approximately 25 OPM employees will remain in Boyers and another 15 will work out of Washington, D.C., to oversee contract compliance and quality control, ensure the confidentiality of records and, in general, guarantee the integrity of the operation.

-End-

OPM NEWS

R | E | L | E | A | S | E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 30, 1995

CONTACT: Mary Ann Maloney
202-606-1800

OPM ISSUES RULES ON RESTORATION RIGHTS OF FEDERAL RESERVISTS

Washington, D.C. --- The Office of Personnel Management is issuing interim regulations on the restoration rights of federal employees who leave their employment to perform temporary duty with the uniformed services of the United States military.

These regulations implement the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), Public Law 103-353, enacted into law on October 13, 1994. The new law includes not only the armed forces, but also the National Guard when engaged in active duty for training, inactive duty or full-time National Guard duty, and the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health.

The new law:

- o makes clear that it is intended to protect the job rights of non-career service persons. The law also establishes a five year cumulative total on military service with the federal government; with certain exceptions allowed for call-ups during emergencies for Reserve drill and annually scheduled active duty for training;
- o accords restoration rights, based on the duration of military service rather than the type of military duty performed; and
- o requires OPM to find employment in the Executive Branch for federal employees when their former agencies determine that it is "impossible or unreasonable" to re-employ them.

The interim regulations also expand the coverage of the affected employees under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) program and the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program. Both the FEGLI and the FEHB regulations are amended to confirm that employees who separate to perform military service under the provisions of this act are considered to be employees in nonpay status. The FEHB regulations are further amended to show that health coverage may continue for up to 18 months after the employee enters military service.

The new law became fully effective on December 12, 1994.

-End-



United States
Office of
Personnel
Management

Office of
Communications

Theodore Roosevelt Building
1900 E Street, NW
Room 5F12
Washington, DC 20415-0001

(202) 606-1800
FAX: (202) 606-2264

OPM NEWS

R | E | L | E | A | S | E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 15, 1995

CONTACT: Michael Orenstein
202-606-1800

"LIVING BENEFITS" INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES; OPEN SEASON DECLARED

Washington, D.C. -- The Office of Personnel Management has announced a limited, open season enrollment period to give more federal employees access to a new "living benefits" feature of the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance program. The open season will run from May 22, 1995, through July 21, 1995.

The living benefits feature, known in the insurance industry as an "accelerated benefit," is an up-front insurance payment to terminally-ill individuals. A living benefits payment can be a financial life line for individuals and their families who incur extreme, uncovered medical- or personal-care expenses that often diminish life savings.

"By making a living benefit available, we can provide some measure of financial comfort to our friends and colleagues," said OPM Director Jim King. "At a time of great personal adjustment, individuals and their loved ones should have peace-of-mind and not be burdened with other concerns."

The "Living Benefits Act" (PL 103-409), sponsored by Congressman Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), and signed by President Clinton in October 1994, becomes effective July 25, 1995. The law authorizes the payment of the "basic" benefit to terminally-ill federal employees and retirees--those with a life expectancy of nine months or less--who are participating in the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) program.

The dollar value of the basic benefit is determined by the individual's salary. For employees, the basic benefit is equal to their current salary rounded to the next thousand dollars, plus \$2,000. Therefore, a salary of \$34,800 carries a basic benefit of

-More-



United States
Office of
Personnel
Management

Office of
Communications

Theodore Roosevelt Building
1900 E Street, NW
Room 5F12
Washington, DC 20415-0001

(202) 606-1800
FAX: (202) 606-2264

\$37,000. The basic benefit for retired federal employees is based on their salary at retirement, reduced over time to not less than 25 percent of the amount of their basic insurance when they retired.

The living benefits payment is unreduced, except for a nominal fee to replace lost interest to the FEGLI program.

Under the law, current employees and retirees may elect to cash-in their total "basic" life insurance amount. Only current employees may elect to receive a partial living benefit (in multiples of \$1,000). Employees who elect a partial living benefit cannot receive future living benefits.

During the FEGLI open season, employees can enroll in the "basic" portion of the life insurance program only. Elections of optional insurance will not be permitted. In addition, only current employees are eligible to enroll during the open season; retired employees, as always, are not eligible to participate in the open season.

Another FEGLI option is available. Public Law 103-336 lets all federal employees and retirees make an irrevocable assignment of their government life insurance coverage to any persons, firms or trusts. This option is useful as a financial planning tool. Enrollees electing this option must assign their basic coverage, as well as insurance options "A" and "B," if any. Option "C" is not assignable.

In April, following briefings with federal benefits administrators, OPM will provide agencies with written guidance on conducting the open season.

-End-



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 16, 1994

CONTACT: Michael Orenstein
(202) 606-1800
mworenst@opm.gov

FEDERAL HIRING PROCESS MORE DIRECT FOR QUALIFIED APPLICANTS

Washington, D.C. -- In fulfilling another recommendation of the Clinton Administration's National Performance Review, U.S. Office of Personnel Management Director Jim King today announced the elimination of two barriers to federal hiring at the entry-level for professional and administrative occupations.

One action eliminates registers, or the "central lists" of applicants maintained by OPM and used to refer job candidates to agencies needing to fill entry-level jobs. The other action taken by OPM eliminates the reliance on a written test as a single examining method and provides agencies with additional examining options based on their specific needs. Mr. King said that these changes to the Administrative Careers With America (ACWA) examinations will result in a skilled, committed and diverse work force.

"Ridding our system of obstacles will make it easier on job applicants, while allowing government to expedite the hiring of employees in professional and administrative occupations who provide service that the American public demands and deserves," said Jim King.

Under the modified examination, applicants will apply for specific job openings rather than broad occupational groups. While written tests will continue to be used for some jobs, taking a test will no longer be the compulsory first step, or hurdle, in the examination process. Instead, applicants will complete computer-scannable questionnaires detailing their qualifications and job-related experience. OPM will score the questionnaire responses to determine the most highly qualified candidates. Hiring agencies will then receive from OPM a list of the best qualified applicants for the job. In addition, agencies may require qualified applicants to take the written test for specific occupations.

Job seekers can find out about available job openings by calling 1-912-757-3000, or contacting their nearest OPM Service Center. The application questionnaires are straightforward and easy to complete. Applicants apply for specific job openings of interest to them and in locations they wish to work. No longer will they languish on a central list waiting for an agency to contact them.

The changes take effect on November 20, 1994. People who already have taken the written test and whose names are now on the central lists will receive a letter explaining that they will need to apply for specific vacancies in the future. They will not need to take the test again, however.

These changes to the ACWA examination implement recommendations in recent reports by the U.S. General Accounting Office and the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board.

-End-

OPM NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 13, 1994

CONTACT: Michael Orenstein
(202) 606-1800
mworenst@opm.gov

VICE PRESIDENT AND OPM DIRECTOR HONOR EMPLOYEE WITH HAMMER AWARD

Washington, D.C. -- Vice President Al Gore today joined U.S. Office of Personnel Management Director Jim King in presenting a Hammer Award to Christopher Patterson, a member of OPM's Staffing Automation Development Team which rid the federal government of red tape and wasteful spending, while improving service to the American taxpayer.

Ms. Merino, an employee in OPM's Philadelphia Service Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was given the award for her help in fulfilling the Administration's pledge to the American public of making government work better and cost less. Accomplishments of the Staffing Automation Development Team laid to rest the conventional wisdom of management gurus who said it couldn't be done.

"In one of the new customer-driven systems, the federal job applicant simply marks a multiple choice form that is scanned into the computer," said Vice President Gore. "Another innovation from the Staffing Automation Development Team makes it simple to find and apply for any nursing job in the government. Just dial 1-800-800-USRN. It is one of the most intelligently designed, customer-friendly automated phone systems anywhere."

Other Hammer Awards were given to employee teams for their accomplishments in abolishing out-dated and over-regulating rules of the 10,000-page Federal Personnel Manual; developing and implementing buyout legislation for Executive Branch employees; producing and transmitting satellite broadcasts for human resources professionals; and, developing automated system that screen and rate job applications thereby improving the process by which agencies get referral of qualified job applicants.

In addition, a Hammer Award was presented to the National Partnership Council for its historic and unprecedented success in laying the foundation for labor-management partnerships in federal agencies.

Quotes to use from the VP:

FPM Sunset: "The FPM was colossal. Ten thousand pages. Webster's unabridged dictionary runs (only) 2,000 pages. And because it (the FPM) was so big, nobody really knew what all was in it. Any government agency that needs to get rid of reams of ridiculous rules in a hurry--and what agency doesn't--should come and see how you did it."

SF-171: "Filling out a government job applications, the formidable 'SF-171' use to be enough to discourage a lot of people. It served as a shield, deflecting many energetic, results-oriented young people way from careers in government. That is not what your customers wanted. So, the 171 goes in the dumpster."

Buyout legislation: "In the old days, costly months would have elapsed while the OPM staff drafted implementing directives, got agency and maybe public comments, then published rigid, formal rules. But, the Buyout Team did things a new way. While Congress was at work over the buyout legislation, OPM's Buyout Team was preparing the agencies to act just on the basis of the law, with no need for implementing regulations. Once the law was enacted, the agencies were ready to go, and they had the flexibility they needed to apply the law to their specific situations."

Satellite broadcasts: "The satellite broadcasts, hosted by agencies like Defense, Agriculture, and Transportation, are sharing information on labor-management partnerships, automation of personnel systems and the new role of the federal manager. This is clearly a situation where the medium is the message. No more rule books handed down from the experts on top."

Automated Systems: "One of the results your customers want is a large pool of well-qualified candidates to hire from. That means you need to let the public know about all the jobs that are available, get lots of people to apply, and then quickly and efficiently screen the applications to find those who are well-qualified. The Career America system lets anyone with a touch-tone phone or a personal computer and modem find out about nearly any job available in the entire government. It's easy to use and it's up and running seven days a week."

- End -

United States Office of Personnel Management	Office of Communications	Theodore Roosevelt Building 1900 E Street, NW Room 5F12 Washington, DC 20415-0001	(202) 606-1800 FAX: (202) 606-2264
---	-----------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

- [To Website Index](#)
- [To OPM Homepage](#)

Web page created 2 December 1997



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 22, 1994

CONTACT: Mary Ann Maloney
(202) 606-1800
mamalone@opm.gov

**CUMBERSOME STANDARD FORM 171 TO BE ELIMINATED,
AS RECOMMENDED BY NATIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

Washington, D.C. -- U.S. Office of Personnel Management Director Jim King today announced that a new proposal will make it simpler to apply for federal jobs. The lengthy Standard Form 171, Application for Federal Employment, currently required for the vast majority of federal occupations will be eliminated, as recommended by Vice President Gore's National Performance Review.

"The intent of the proposal is to make it easier for people to apply for federal jobs," said Jim King. "The SF-171 is too cumbersome and sends the wrong message when we are trying to move to a more customer-friendly and flexible system."

"The easiest way to begin the search for a federal job will now be to review OPM's centralized list of all agency job openings and follow the simple instructions given," said Jim King.

The job list is available through OPM's Career America Connection on 912-757-3000 (telephone listing) or our Federal Job Opportunities Bulletin Board on 912-757-3100 (requires a computer and modem). Other options are to use the touch screens at OPM Federal Employment Information Centers located throughout the country or visit a local State Employment Service office. TDD numbers also are available.

The new proposal highlights OPM's commitment to simplifying the application process through computerized hiring methods. For selected jobs, applicants can apply to OPM by a telephone. For other jobs, job seekers will complete a questionnaire that is read and scored by computer. Both methods drastically reduce the time it takes an applicant to apply and the time it takes to produce a list of ranked candidates.

Where automation is not used, OPM proposes that applicants be given a choice in how they handle job applications. Options include the use of a resume, a proposed optional application form available in paper format or on electronic file, or any other written format.

Under the proposal, applicants who prefer to continue using an SF-171 may do so. To reduce the paperwork burden and better protect individual privacy, information on past legal violations will be collected separately.

The proposal published in the Federal Register on June 22, 1994, is subject to a 30-day comment period and approval by the Office of Management and Budget under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 24, 1994

CONTACT: Janice R. Lachance
(202) 606-1800

**OPM DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT ON THE VOTE
ON FEDERAL WORKFORCE RESTRUCTURING ACT OF 1994**

Washington, D.C. -- Jim King, Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, today issued the following statement upon Senate passage of H.R. 3345, the Federal Workforce Restructuring Act:

"I deeply appreciate the leadership shown by the Senate today. They had a choice between right and wrong, saving money and wasting money, compassion and inhumanity. I am pleased that they made the right choice.

"By allowing buyouts they built on successful private sector experience and made the only choice that made good management sense. Now that there is an incentive for people to leave government employment, officials can respond to taxpayers and create a government that works better and costs less. By broadly targeting which positions should be eliminated, the Administration can reduce and streamline the government in a more cost-effective, humane way."

- End -

United States Office of Personnel Management	Office of Communications	Theodore Roosevelt Building 1900 E Street, NW Room 5F12 Washington, DC 20415-0001	(202) 606-1800 FAX: (202) 606-2264
---	-----------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

- [To Website Index](#)
- [To OPM Homepage](#)

Web page created 2 December 1997



United States
Office of
Personnel
Management

1900 E Street, NW
Washington, D.C.
20415-0001

NEWS

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

ROOM 5F12

(202) 606-1800/FAX 606-2264

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 21, 1993

CONTACT: Michael Orenstein
(202) 606-1800

FAMILY-FRIENDLY LEAVE RULES GIVE FEDERAL WORKERS TIME OFF TO GIVE CARE OR WELCOME NEW LIFE

Washington, D.C. -- Office of Personnel Management Director Jim King today issued regulations intended to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of the family. The regulations entitle employees to receive extended, unpaid leave for births and adoptions, as well as family and medical emergencies. The interim regulations take effect August 5, 1993.

"The protection of jobs and livelihood during times of serious family illness, or during periods of change brought on by the birth or adoption of a child, is a humane policy for our nation," said OPM Director Jim King. "No one is immune to situations that may require aid from our employers."

OPM's regulations implement provisions in Title II of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Specifically, the regulations provide employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for:

- o the birth of a child and care of the newborn;
- o the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
- o the care of the employee's spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition; and,
- o a serious personal health condition that makes the employee unable to perform essential duties of the job.

"The Clinton Administration has made implementation of this family-friendly initiative a top priority," said Jim King. "In promoting the stability and economic security of families by returning employees to their same position or an equivalent position with no loss of pay or benefits, the regulations also enable government to retain a quality work force."

In addition to job protection, the Act also permits employees to continue their health benefits coverage by paying their share of

-Over-

the premium.

President Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act on February 5, 1993. Title I of the Family and Medical Leave Act covers private sector employees, state and local government employees, and certain federal employees not covered by Title II. Regulations for Title I were issued by the Department of Labor in June.

-End-