

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

5 CFR Part 890

RIN 3206-AI37

Federal Employees Health Benefits Program: Effective Dates

AGENCY: Office of Personnel Management.

ACTION: Notice of withdrawal of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is withdrawing its proposal to revise the regulations on adopting January 1 as the effective date for all annual open season enrollment changes and new enrollments in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB) which was published August 31, 1998, FR Doc. 98-23335. The regulation would have changed the existing FEHB regulations concerning the effective date from the 1st day of the first pay period in the new calendar year. This regulation would have concurrently changed the effective date of open season changes in enrollment made by employees, annuitants, former spouses and individuals enrolled under the temporary continuation of coverage (TCC) provisions of FEHB law.

The proposed regulation would have standardized the effective date of most of these new enrollments or changes in enrollment and made it consistent with the beginning of health benefits offered by FEHB plans, which are based on the calendar year. The intent of the regulation was to make it easier for employing offices and health plan carriers to administer the Program and reduce the potential for errors in determining effective dates.

The comment period for the proposed regulation ended September 30, 1998. OPM received comments from agencies that their automated payroll systems were not functionally capable of prorating employees' premium shares on other than a pay period basis. January 1 typically falls in the middle of a bi-weekly pay period, the most prevalent

pay period used by Federal agencies. Therefore, most agencies would be required to accurately allocate the pro rata premiums to employees' pay on a timely basis. Some agencies reported that they simply would be unable to pro-rate premiums from January 1 to the beginning of the first pay period in the calendar year. Since 1998, OPM has subsequently raised this issue with agencies with similar responses.

OPM is responsible for the Administration's new e-Payroll initiative, part of the President's Management Agenda. This initiative is designed to modernize the Government's payroll system. OPM has selected four payroll service providers to replace the current 22 providers for the Federal government's 1.8 million employees. Under the e-Payroll initiative plan, the four providers will begin government-wide processing in September 2004. Once these new systems are in place, we will reconsider the status of this proposed FEHB rulemaking.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anne Easton on (202) 606-0004.

Office of Personnel Management.

Kay Coles James,
Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

9 CFR Parts 55 and 81

[Docket No. 00-108-2]

RIN 0579-AB35

Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program and Interstate Movement of Captive Deer and Elk

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: We are proposing to establish a herd certification program to eliminate chronic wasting disease from captive cervids in the United States. Participating deer and elk herds would have to follow program requirements for animal identification, testing, herd management, and movement of animals

into and from herds. After 5 years of enrollment with no evidence of chronic wasting disease, a herd would be granted "certified" status. Owners of herds could enroll in a State program that we have determined has requirements equivalent to the Federal program, or could enroll directly in the Federal program if no State program exists. We are also proposing to establish interstate movement requirements to prevent the interstate movement of deer and elk that pose a risk of spreading CWD. These actions are intended to eliminate CWD from the captive deer and elk herds in the United States.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before February 23, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 00-108-2, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 00-108-2. If you use e-mail, address your comment to regulations@aphis.usda.gov. Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and "Docket No. 00-108-2" on the subject line.

You may read any comments that we receive on this docket in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register**, and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Lynn Creekmore, Staff Veterinarian, VS, APHIS, 2150 Centre Avenue, Fort Collins, CO 80526, telephone (970) 494-7354.