

U.S. Office of Personnel Management**- Ensuring the Federal Government has an effective civilian workforce**

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<http://www.opm.gov/news/opm-director-addresses-the-4th-annual-world-health-care-congress,1173.aspx>

News Release

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OPM Director Addresses the 4th Annual World Health Care Congress*Says Health Care Choices for Federal Employees and Retirees have improved significantly*

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director Linda M. Springer yesterday addressed more than 1,600 government officials, CEO's, and senior executives of the health care industry at the 4th Annual World Health Care Congress. Springer spoke of the many improvements to the health care system for Federal employees.

“With oversight of the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) program, OPM is responsible for ensuring the delivery of quality health care services to approximately eight million Federal employees, retirees, and their families,” Director Springer said. “With 284 plans from which to choose, we have made it a priority to ensure our carriers meet consumer demands for more transparency, interoperability, and quality, making it easier to shop for and obtain affordable, quality health care.”

“OPM has worked with our carriers to expand consumer options by offering 29 high-deductible health plans with health savings accounts (HSAs) or health reimbursement arrangements (HRAs), and three consumer driven plans which reward consumers who make treatment decisions based on quality and price,” Springer said. “We have also successfully implemented, for the first time, a quality Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), which currently serves more than 700,000 employees and their families.”

Springer also noted the ability of FEHB carriers to keep annual average premium increases lower than industry trends, with a 1.8 percent increase in 2007, compared to an industry average of 7.7 percent.

The next steps will be to ensure FEHB carriers carry through on their commitments to adopt new Health Information Technology (HIT) tools, including electronic data interoperability standards, and to increase quality and price transparency measures, according to Springer.

“Shopping for quality health care should be as easy and open a process as shopping for basic consumer goods,” Director Springer concluded.

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Our mission is to ensure the Federal Government has an effective civilian workforce. OPM supports U.S. agencies with personnel services and policy leadership including staffing tools, guidance on labor-management relations and programs to improve work force performance.

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