

Health Benefit Plan history



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Another opportunity will be here from Nov. 11 through Dec. 9 to promote *your* union-owned and union-operated health benefit plan, the NALC Health Benefit Plan. This year our Open Season slogan is, “You Add It Up.” Whether you are a member or non-member, I firmly believe in the following equation: NALC HBP quality of benefits + NALC HBP years of experience + NALC HBP affordability = a highly competitive choice for your needs.

Although some of you may know the origination of the Plan, I would like to kick off this pre-Open Season article with some Plan history.

Beginning in 1950, the National Association of Letter Carriers began

its own independent health benefit plan with \$5,000 borrowed from the union’s treasury. The Health Benefit Plan staff consisted of two clerks on loan from NALC Headquarters. The location was one small room on H Street NW in Washington, DC. Letter carriers paid 100 percent of the premium out of their own pockets, and at the close of the initial open enrollment period in April 1950, the total Plan membership was 4,116.

Some of the benefits included:

- Family plan premium: \$6.35
- Daily hospital room payment: \$10
- Miscellaneous benefits: \$200 (X-rays, lab fees, etc.)
- Surgical schedule: \$200 limit.
- Total maternity benefits: \$50

1960—As we made it to our 10th anniversary, we were thrilled to announce that our membership was at 30,000, and we were now occupying three floors of the NALC building; however, another big change was knocking on the door. That change was the NALC Health Benefit Plan becoming part of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). Once again, our numbers increased as letter carriers joined the Plan, bringing us to a grand total of 101,503 members.

1970 to 1990—In the ’70s, ’80s and early ’90s, the Plan continued to do well; however, building space was an issue and two more moves would be needed. By the end of 1972, the first move was to a warehouse on Sunset Hill Road in Reston, VA. With a little remodeling, the warehouse became home, and business continued on. By 1980, advanced processing dramatically changed the claims procedures. Expansion of our operation was essential, as new

record-keeping and monitoring demands were placed on our computerized system. You guessed it: With an increasing employee count and adding equipment, space was again at a premium.

1990 to now—Finally, on June 18, 1990, the Plan moved to Waverly Court in Ashburn, VA, where we now reside. At this time, our employee count is at approximately 350, with our member count at 116,000. Have the days always been full of sunshine without problems, premium increases or membership losses? Absolutely not; however, the Plan has always pulled through and remained a strong contender.

Unfortunately, our premium is not \$6.35, as it was in 1950, but I believe if you take a good look and compare our benefits with other FEHB contenders, you will not be disappointed.

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Dare to Compare

Adding on to my last comment in the above paragraph, I would like to remind each of you about “Dare to Compare.” If you are a consistent reader of *The Postal Record*, you probably have heard this slogan or motto before; nevertheless, it cannot be repeated enough. I encourage each individual to take the challenge and “Dare to Compare” your current plan against the NALC Health Benefit Plan. You will see that the NALC HBP is a comprehensive plan with quality service, benefits and reasonable premiums. To compare:

- Go to: opm.gov/insure
- On the right side of the page, click on the quick link, “Compare Health Plans”
- Insert your ZIP code. Hit “Enter.” Then select the plans you wish to compare (up to four plans).
- Choose an employee type, such as “U.S. Postal Service or Annuitant.” Click “Next.”
- Choose a pay frequency, such as biweekly or monthly. The comparison will be shown on your screen.

Reminder: At this time, we have not been given approval from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to release the premiums and 2014 benefits; however, we will distribute this information as soon as permitted.