Open Disputes for USPS Noncareer Health Plan: With regard to the USPS Noncarrier Plan, the remaining disputes concern the proper or contractually required effective dates for these new rates the USPS says took until August 1, 2020, towards completion of the upcoming open season, whereas the NPMHU argues that MHAs who had already had this coverage as of April 25, 2020 and are eligible to obtain this coverage because of a 360-day reappointment or a qualifying life event between April 25, 2020 and August 1, 2020 should have the new rates applied to them on April 25, 2020 or the pay period after their reappointment or life event, whichever is earlier. In addition, the Postal Service previously proposed, and the USPS NPMHU announced, a special open season that was to take place four weeks earlier than July 10 to August 9, 2020. The USPS has since unilaterally withdrawn and rescheduled these dates for a special open season, citing administrative burdens and lack of resources. This unilateral action and delayed enrollment period also will be addressed in a National-level grievance.

Second, after an initial appointment for a 360-day term and upon reappointment to another 360-day term, an eligible MHA may elect to participate in the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program (FEHB). For most health plans, the total expense would have to be covered completely by the MHA, but the Postal Service under the 2019 National Agreement will make a contribution toward the premium for any eligible MHA who selects the Mail Handler Benefit Plan (MHBP) Value Plan or MHBP Consumer Option. For self-only enrollment, this contribution shall be equal to, but not greater than, the dollar value of the Postal Service’s contribution toward self-only coverage for MHAs under the USPS Plan. For self plus one or family coverage, the contribution shall be equal to, but not greater than, the dollar value of 75% of the total premium for any one plan (calculated separately for individual and family coverage), and the fact that the cost difference between self plus one and family coverage is much lower in the FEHB than in the USPS Noncarrier Plan. The NPMHU has been assured that the rates are correct, and the Postal Service has agreed that these rates would be correct during 2020 if the parties agreed on the effective date of such coverage.

The larger problem is that the USPS does not agree that these MHBP rates should be available to MHAs until January 2021, and the actual rates change at the beginning of every year. We are continuing to meet with the USPS in an attempt to reach resolution.

All MHAs will soon receive notification from the USPS promoting the referenced special open enrollment opportunity for the USPS Noncarrier Plan. As of this printing, we are told that the letter will only include the USPS noncarrier rates. It is the position of the USPS that an MHAs enrollment into the MHBP (Consumer or Value) under the improved terms of the 2019 National Agreement is not available until January 2022. Thus, as of today, if an eligible MHA enrolls in MHBP Consumer or Value before January 2021, they will not receive employer matching funds and will be responsible for 100% of the premium. As noted, the NPMHU is continuing discussions with the USPS on this matter. Until this matter is resolved, the NPMHU recommends that affected MHAs avoid enrollment in the MHBP options until open season in November and December 2020, for coverage effective in January 2021.