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# **Circular Letter**

Special:

**TO: ALL PEMHCA HEALTH BENEFITS OFFICERS AND ASSISTANT BENEFITS OFFICERS**

**SUBJECT: COLLECTING AND MAINTAINING DEPENDENT SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS**

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## **Policy**

Effective September 13, 2010, CalPERS Health Plan subscribers are required to provide the Social Security number for all dependents upon enrollment or upon change of enrollment. Employers are required to collect and enter the Social Security number for their active employees' dependents into the Automated Communication Exchange System (ACES).

In addition, employers must establish and maintain a collection and documentation process to ensure employees and their dependents have a Social Security number attached to their health enrollment.

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## **How CalPERS Uses Social Security Numbers**

Existing federal regulations require CalPERS and our health plans to report the Social Security numbers of our members and their dependents to federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The federal government uses the Social Security numbers for various purposes, such as coordination of federal and state benefits, and verifying eligibility for subsidies and reimbursements. Providing Social Security numbers maximizes the federal funding available to help offset program costs.

In addition, CalPERS uses Social Security numbers as a means to:

- Identify and verify eligibility
  - Coordinate benefits among health plans
  - Resolve member appeals/complaints/grievances with health plans
  - Identify and resolve dual coverage and split coverage issues
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## **ACES System Modifications**

ACES has been modified to ensure employers can update all dependents' Social Security numbers.

Previously, when an employer submitted a transaction to update a dependent's Social Security number, the transaction would fall to a manual correction. ACES now allows the transaction to update.

**ACES  
System  
Modifications  
(contd.)**

Also, when entering a new enrollment or change of enrollment for a dependent, ACES now displays a warning message if the dependent's Social Security number field is left blank. Clicking the "Okay" button on the warning message allows the ACES user to continue the transaction.

For successfully applied transactions that include dependent information without a Social Security number, the employer detail report will now include a "Follow-up Required" message. It is the employer's responsibility to establish a follow-up process to obtain the Social Security number and update ACES as soon as possible, but no later than 90 days after the enrollment is processed.

The current process requiring the entry of a spouse's or domestic partner's Social Security number will not change.

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**Enrollment  
Forms**

Employees must complete a **Health Benefits Plan Enrollment Form** (HBD-12) when enrolling a new dependent or making a health benefit change.

**HBD-12 Form Online**

The HBD-12 form located at **www.calpers.ca.gov** in the CalPERS Online Forms and Publication Center has been modified to include space for all dependents' Social Security numbers. This form is available online.

**HBD-12 Form (Triplicate version)**

The HBD-12 form (triplicate version), which can be ordered in bulk quantities, is being modified to include space for dependent Social Security numbers. Newly revised HBD-12s will be available to order in bulk quantities in a couple of weeks.

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**Exceptions**

There are some instances when a Social Security number cannot be furnished upon the initial enrollment. For example: a newborn child or a legal non-citizen who is awaiting the receipt of a Social Security card. The enrollment may be processed without the dependent Social Security number, however, employers must create a follow-up process to collect these Social Security numbers within 90 days of enrollment. Once collected, employers must update the ACES system with the Social Security number.

For more information about obtaining a Social Security number, please contact the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213 or online at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

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**For More  
Information**

For up-to-date information about CalPERS and Health Care Reform please refer to the Health Care Reform page on CalPERS On-Line at **[www.calpers.ca.gov](http://www.calpers.ca.gov)**. If you need further assistance, please contact the Employer Contact Center at **888 CalPERS** (or **888-225-7377**).

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Sincerely,

HOLLY A. FONG, Chief  
Office of Employer and Member Health Services