

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation**  
**DIVISION OF INSURANCE**

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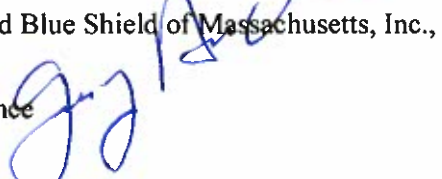
**Bulletin 2020-27**

To: Commercial Health Insurers, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Inc., and Health Maintenance Organizations

From: Gary D. Anderson, Commissioner of Insurance

Date: September 14, 2020

Re: Guidance Regarding Open Enrollment Period for Benefit Year 2021



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The Massachusetts Division of Insurance (“Division”) issues this Bulletin 2020-27: Guidance Regarding Open Enrollment Period for Benefit Year 2021 (“Bulletin”) to provide guidance in connection with the 2019 open enrollment period for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Division has collaborated with the Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector Authority (the “Connector”) in developing this Bulletin, which supplements Bulletin 2014-11: Open Enrollment for Insured Health Benefit Plans.

Pursuant to 45 C.F.R. § 155.410, for the 2018 benefit year and beyond, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”) has established that the annual exchange open enrollment period will commence on November 1<sup>st</sup> and extends through December 15<sup>th</sup> of the calendar year preceding the benefit year. However, HHS has permitted states with their own state-based exchanges to implement a Special Enrollment Period to extend open enrollment under existing authority.

The Connector has informed the Division that is scheduling a Special Open Enrollment Period so that the Massachusetts open enrollment period for eligible individuals will begin November 1, 2020, and will end on January 23, 2021.

M.G.L. c. 176J, § 4(a)(3) provides that the “open enrollment period shall be from October 15 to December 7, inclusive, unless otherwise designated by the Commissioner.” To ensure that the dates of the open enrollment period both on and off the Connector are the same, the 2021 benefit-year open enrollment period for the commercial non-group market will also run from November 1, 2020 through January 23, 2021. For persons enrolling through the Connector, the January 23<sup>rd</sup> open enrollment closing date aligns with the Connector’s plan selection and due dates for payment on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month and will allow consumers some additional time to enroll in or switch health plans.

If you have any questions about this Bulletin, please contact Niels Puetthoff, Director of Bureau of Managed Care, at (617) 521-7326 or at [Niels.Puetthoff@mass.gov](mailto:Niels.Puetthoff@mass.gov).