

with the Government Accountability Office to provide periodic evaluations of the program.

(Added Pub. L. 108–496, § 2, Dec. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 4005.)

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Dec. 23, 2004, and applicable to contracts that take effect with respect to the calendar year 2006, see section 7 of Pub. L. 108–496, set out as a note under section 8951 of this title.

#### § 8961. Jurisdiction of courts

The district courts of the United States have original jurisdiction, concurrent with the United States Court of Federal Claims, of a civil action or claim against the United States under this chapter after such administrative remedies as required under section 8953(d) have been exhausted, but only to the extent judicial review is not precluded by any dispute resolution or other remedy under this chapter.

(Added Pub. L. 108–496, § 2, Dec. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 4005.)

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Dec. 23, 2004, and applicable to contracts that take effect with respect to the calendar year 2006, see section 7 of Pub. L. 108–496, set out as a note under section 8951 of this title.

#### § 8962. Administrative functions

(a) The Office shall prescribe regulations to carry out this chapter. The regulations may exclude an employee on the basis of the nature and type of employment or conditions pertaining to it.

(b) The Office shall, as appropriate, provide for coordinated enrollment, promotion, and education efforts as appropriate in consultation with each qualified company. The information under this subsection shall include information relating to the dental benefits available under chapter 89, including the advantages and disadvantages of obtaining additional coverage under this chapter.

(Added Pub. L. 108–496, § 2, Dec. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 4006.)

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Dec. 23, 2004, and applicable to contracts that take effect with respect to the calendar year 2006, see section 7 of Pub. L. 108–496, set out as a note under section 8951 of this title.

### CHAPTER 89B—ENHANCED VISION BENEFITS

Sec.	
8981.	Definitions.
8982.	Availability of vision benefits.
8983.	Contracting authority.
8984.	Benefits.
8985.	Information to individuals eligible to enroll.
8986.	Election of coverage.
8987.	Coverage of restored survivor or disability annuitants.

Sec.	
8988.	Premiums.
8989.	Preemption.
8990.	Studies, reports, and audits.
8991.	Jurisdiction of courts.
8992.	Administrative functions.

#### § 8981. Definitions

In this chapter:

(1) The term “employee” means an employee defined under section 8901(1) and an employee of the District of Columbia courts.

(2) The terms “annuitant”, “member of family”, and “dependent” have the meanings as such terms are defined under paragraphs (3), (5), and (9), respectively, of section 8901.

(3) The term “eligible individual” refers to an individual described in paragraph (1), (2), or (8), without regard to whether the individual is enrolled in a health benefits plan under chapter 89.

(4) The term “Office” means the Office of Personnel Management.

(5) The term “qualified company” means a company (or consortium of companies or an employee organization defined under section 8901(8)) that offers indemnity, preferred provider organization, health maintenance organization, or discount vision programs and if required is licensed to issue applicable coverage in any number of States, taking any subsidiaries of such a company into account (and, in the case of a consortium, considering the member companies and any subsidiaries thereof, collectively).

(6) The term “employee organization” means an association or other organization of employees which is national in scope, or in which membership is open to all employees of a Government agency who are eligible to enroll in a health benefits plan under chapter 89.

(7) The term “State” includes the District of Columbia.

(8)(A) The term “covered TRICARE-eligible individual”—

(i) means an individual entitled to medical care under chapter 55 of title 10, pursuant to section 1076d, 1076e, 1079(a), 1086(c), or 1086(d) of such title, who the Secretary of Defense determines in accordance with an agreement entered into under subparagraph (B) should be an eligible individual for purposes of this chapter; and

(ii) does not include an individual covered under section 1110b of title 10.

(B) The Secretary of Defense shall enter into an agreement with the Director of the Office relating to classes of individuals described in subparagraph (A)(i) who should be eligible individuals for purposes of this chapter.

(Added Pub. L. 108–496, § 3, Dec. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 4006; amended Pub. L. 109–356, title I, § 117(a)(2), Oct. 16, 2006, 120 Stat. 2027; Pub. L. 114–328, div. A, title VII, § 715(a)(2), Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2221.)

#### Editorial Notes

##### AMENDMENTS

2016—Par. (3). Pub. L. 114–328, § 715(a)(2)(A), substituted “paragraph (1), (2), or (8)” for “paragraph (1) or (2)”.

Par. (8). Pub. L. 114-328, § 715(a)(2)(B), added par. (8). 2006—Par. (1). Pub. L. 109-356, which directed insertion of “and an employee of the District of Columbia courts” at end of par. (1), was executed by making the insertion before the period, to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2016 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 114-328 applicable with respect to the first contract year for chapter 89A or 89B of this title, as applicable, that begins on or after Jan. 1, 2018, see section 715(c) of Pub. L. 114-328, set out as a note under section 8951 of this title.

##### EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Dec. 23, 2004, and applicable to contracts that take effect with respect to the calendar year 2006, see section 7 of Pub. L. 108-496, set out as a note under section 8951 of this title.

#### § 8982. Availability of vision benefits

(a) The Office shall establish and administer a program through which an eligible individual may obtain vision coverage to supplement coverage available through chapter 89.

(b) The Office shall determine, in the exercise of its reasonable discretion, the financial requirements for qualified companies to participate in the program.

(c) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit the availability of vision benefits provided by health benefits plans under chapter 89.

(Added Pub. L. 108-496, § 3, Dec. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 4007.)

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Dec. 23, 2004, and applicable to contracts that take effect with respect to the calendar year 2006, see section 7 of Pub. L. 108-496, set out as a note under section 8951 of this title.

#### § 8983. Contracting authority

(a)(1) The Office shall contract with a reasonable number of qualified companies for a policy or policies of benefits described under section 8984 without regard to section 6101(b) to (d) of title 41 or any other statute requiring competitive bidding. An employee organization may contract with a qualified company for the purpose of participating with that qualified company in any contract between the Office and that qualified company.

(2) The Office shall ensure that each resulting contract is awarded on the basis of contractor qualifications, price, and reasonable competition.

(b) Each contract under this section shall contain—

(1) the requirements under section 8902(d), (f), and (i) made applicable to contracts under this section by regulations prescribed by the Office;

(2) the terms of the enrollment period; and

(3) such other terms and conditions as may be mutually agreed to by the Office and the qualified company involved, consistent with the requirements of this chapter and regulations prescribed by the Office.

(c) Nothing in this chapter shall, in the case of an individual electing vision supplemental benefit coverage under this chapter after the expiration of such individual's first opportunity to enroll, preclude the application of waiting periods more stringent than those that would have applied if that opportunity had not yet expired.

(d)(1) Each contract under this chapter shall require the qualified company to agree—

(A) to provide payments or benefits to an eligible individual if such individual is entitled thereto under the terms of the contract; and

(B) with respect to disputes regarding claims for payments or benefits under the terms of the contract—

(i) to establish internal procedures designed to expeditiously resolve such disputes; and

(ii) to establish, for disputes not resolved through procedures under clause (i), procedures for 1 or more alternative means of dispute resolution involving independent third-party review under appropriate circumstances by entities mutually acceptable to the Office and the qualified company.

(2) A determination by a qualified company as to whether or not a particular individual is eligible to obtain coverage under this chapter shall be subject to review only to the extent and in the manner provided in the applicable contract.

(3) For purposes of applying the Contract Disputes Act of 1978<sup>1</sup> to disputes arising under this chapter between a qualified company and the Office—

(A) the agency board having jurisdiction to decide an appeal relative to such a dispute shall be such board of contract appeals as the Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall specify in writing (after appropriate arrangements, as described in section 8(c)<sup>1</sup> of such Act); and

(B) the district courts of the United States shall have original jurisdiction, concurrent with the United States Court of Federal Claims, of any action described in section 10(a)(1)<sup>1</sup> of such Act relative to such a dispute.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be considered to grant authority for the Office or third-party reviewer to change the terms of any contract under this chapter.

(f) Contracts under this chapter shall be for a uniform term of 7 years and may not be renewed automatically.

(Added Pub. L. 108-496, § 3, Dec. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 4007; amended Pub. L. 111-350, § 5(a)(17), Jan. 4, 2011, 124 Stat. 3842.)

#### Editorial Notes

##### REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Contract Disputes Act of 1978, referred to in subsec. (d)(3), is Pub. L. 95-563, Nov. 1, 1978, 92 Stat. 2383, which was classified principally to chapter 9 (§ 601 et seq.) of former Title 41, Public Contracts, and was substantially repealed and restated as chapter 71 (§ 7101 et seq.) of Title 41, Public Contracts, by Pub. L. 111-350, §§ 3, 7(b), Jan. 4, 2011, 124 Stat. 3677, 3855. Sections 8(c) and 10(a)(1) of the Act, which were classified to sections

<sup>1</sup> See References in Text note below.