

NATIONAL PROVIDER IDENTIFIER (NPI) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Does NPI only affect Medicare and Medicaid providers and their claims?

No. All healthcare providers who send or receive standard electronic transactions need to obtain an NPI. If a provider does not already have one, they can apply for an NPI by calling the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) at 800-465-3203, or send an email to customerservice@npienumerator.com. Failure to obtain an NPI may be viewed as a violation of the good faith provisions of CMS' contingency guidance.

What about NPI for those who file paper claims?

If a provider only bills claims on paper, providers need to be aware that some health plans, including Medicare, are requiring the use of NPI's on paper transactions (such as paper insurance claims). In addition, if a provider refers patients to another provider who is filing claims electronically, that practitioner will need to obtain the referring provider's NPI in order to process the electronic claim. In short, all healthcare providers are encouraged to apply for and share their NPI.

When will Medicare begin rejecting non-revised CMS-1500 (12-90) paper claim forms?

CMS announced that they will continue to accept the old HCFA forms until June 1st, 2007. This date is tentative. CMS will announce a firm date for the termination of the form soon.

What does an NPI look like?

An NPI is a 10-digit number. All characters are numeric. The first digit is always a 1, 2, 3 or a 4. The first 9 characters are the identifier and the last character is a check digit. The check digit helps detect invalid NPI's. For example, if a provider's Tax ID is 123456789, he or she cannot start sending 1234567890 and expect it to be processed as an NPI.

If a provider has applied for and received an NPI, what's the next step?

Providers using our clearinghouse services (Stratus, Phoenix, or Claims Manager) need to notify us of their NPI, regardless of claim processing platform.

What about insurance carriers?

Providers should contact their insurance carriers to find out what the carriers' specific enrollment requirements are. Some carriers may take this information over the phone; some may require notification on letterhead or may have a form that needs to be filled out.

How do I get my NPI number?

If you don't already have your NPI number, you can apply for an NPI number by calling the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) at 800-465-3203 or send an e-mail to customerservice@npienumerator.com.

What if the provider starts billing NPI on claims without notifying the carrier first?

Carriers may reject or suspend payment on claims sent with an unregistered NPI.

I've heard about a May 23rd deadline but then I heard that it was moved. Which is correct?

CMS (the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) announced a contingency plan on April 2, 2007. It was determined that the percentage of providers outputting NPI information was too low. Providers and payers now have additional time to comply (through 05/23/2008), as long as they are making a "good faith effort". This means that providers who were outputting both an NPI and a legacy Medicare ID should continue doing so. Providers who have obtained an NPI, but haven't been using it, should do so now as long as the payer and clearinghouse have been previously notified. We want to make sure that our customers don't wait until they start getting rejected claims. They should take steps towards compliance now.

What about BCBS and other commercial carriers?

Many carriers will model their plans after CMS'. However, they do have the right to implement NPI edits at any time within the next year. We encourage providers to output dual ID's until they receive notification that only the NPI will be required.

What if a provider is filing electronically but through another clearinghouse or using free software from Medicare?

Providers who are using another clearinghouse or print image software from Medicare need to do these three things:

- 1) Notify their clearinghouse/Medicare that they intend to start outputting NPI.
- 2) Make sure that their software version and format has the ability to output NPI.
- 3) Re-map their electronic claim output in order for their clearinghouse/Medicare to be able to "recognize" the NPI data within their files.