



## Have you determined how the National Provider Identifier (NPI) will impact your practice?

The NPI is part of the HIPAA mandate requiring a standard unique identifier for healthcare providers. This 10-digit number will replace other identifiers such as your UPIN, BCBS numbers, other payer identifiers, Tri-Care, Medicaid number, etc. The NPI will be assigned and maintained by CMS.

Providers have been applying for an NPI since May 23, 2005 and will be required to use it in electronic transactions by May 23, 2007. However, before you apply, several issues need to be addressed to insure a smooth transition for your practice.

A complete analysis and a thorough understanding of the provider numbers you currently use and how they relate to your new NPI is the basis for a smooth transition and uninterrupted payment reimbursement.

First, you should assess all the provider numbers you currently use.

- Are some set up for special reimbursement?
- Do some indicate service location?
- Do you have multiple numbers for the same payer?

Why should you do this kind of analysis? Because:

- Only one NPI will be allowed for an individual provider.
- Organization providers (hospitals, group practices, etc.) will be allowed multiple "sub-part" NPIs.

It will be your responsibility to obtain your NPI(s), align them with your current provider number(s) where appropriate and then share this information with your payers.

Yes, that's right, YOU have to inform the payers and plans about your new NPI numbers!

As with other facets of HIPAA-AS, system changes will be required to support the NPI.

So it's not too early to start asking the following questions:

1. Will your practice management system or clearinghouse require changes to accommodate the new number?
2. Will other changes need to be made to your system to remove the numbers being replaced?
3. Do you have any logic in your systems tied to your current provider numbers or that will need to be added for the NPI?
4. Will these changes impact your paper claims?

If your vendor needs to make these changes, you need to understand when the changes are scheduled, how they will be tested, impacts to training your staff and any possible office procedure changes.

Got your NPI and no one wants it? ★ Could happen! Payers and Plans will also be getting their systems ready for NPI. Check with your clearinghouses and payers to plan your testing and rollout dates:

- Some payers plan to begin accepting the NPI long before the May 23, 2007 compliance date (Medicare and some other health plans are already accepting NPIs for testing).
- You will want to allow time for testing with each payer to insure the NPI is setup for accurate and timely reimbursement.

Get in touch with your vendors, clearinghouses and payers now to find out their planned rollout dates. Many will have NPI Implementation websites available.

Be an active participant as the industry comes together to refine the necessary NPI Implementation stages to get us from today to May 2007.

For additional NPI information visit the CMS website:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/>