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MLN Matters Number: SE0811 **Revised**

Related Change Request (CR) #: N/A

Related CR Release Date: N/A

Effective Date: N/A

Related CR Transmittal #: N/A

Implementation Date: N/A

Pre-Bidding Activities for the Medicare Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS) Competitive Bidding Program

Note: This article is impacted by the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008, which was enacted on July 15, 2008. That legislation delays the implementation of the DMEPOS competitive bidding program until 2009 and makes other changes to the program.

Provider Types Affected

Suppliers of Durable Medical Equipment (DME) that wish to participate in the upcoming Medicare DMEPOS competitive bidding program.

Provider Action Needed

In order to participate in the second round of the DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program, suppliers will be required to register in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) security system known as the Individuals Authorized Access to CMS Computer Services (IACS). This includes suppliers that bid in the first round of competition last year and are interested in competing in the second round. Although the bidding window for the second round of competition may not be announced before the issue date of this article, CMS urges suppliers planning

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to bid in the 2008 bidding cycle to make sure their provider enrollment record is current. Specifically, suppliers should verify their supplier number(s) and Authorized Official(s) information associated with that supplier number(s) on file with the National Supplier Clearinghouse (NSC). The accuracy of this data is critical for successful bid registration.

Background

In this year's bid cycle, suppliers who wish to bid will need to first register in IACS, before the bidding window opens. There will be three user roles available, which are described as follows:

- Authorized Official (AO) – Each supplier's organization will be allowed one AO. The AO role can approve all other users associated with their organization who are requesting access to the bidding system. The AO will be able to input bid data, approve Form A and certify Form B in the bidding system.
- Backup Authorized Official (BAO) - Each supplier organization will be allowed to designate one or more Backup Authorized Officials (BAOs). In this role, the BAO can approve the supplier's End User registration for access to the bidding system. Like the AO, the BAO can also input bid data, approve Form A and certify Form B in the bidding system.
- End User - Each supplier organization will be allowed one or more End User(s). The End User can input bid data, but cannot approve Form A or certify Form B.

Save Time and Delay by Verifying NSC Information Prior to Registering to Bid

Only those AOs listed on the CMS-855S (Medicare Enrollment Application) as an AO can register in IACS to approve and certify as described above. As part of the CMS-855S, a supplier designates one or more AO(s). The AO is an appointed official to whom the organization has granted the legal authority to enroll it in the Medicare program and to commit the organization to fully abide by the statutes, regulations and program instructions of the Medicare program.

End Users do not need to be listed on the CMS-855S. However, the AO or BAO will need to approve an End User's request for access to the bidding system.

Take Action Now

Be sure that the data you are submitting is current and in accordance with that submitted to the NSC. In particular, this concerns the AO's name, date of birth,

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Social Security Number (SSN), and mailing address. If any of these data elements have changed since your last submission to the NSC, then you should PROMPTLY complete a change of information on the CMS 855-S.

CMS urges that suppliers do it now. The NSC processing time to complete a change of information on the CMS-855S is approximately 45 days and all submissions are processed in the order in which they are received.

Overview of AO IACS Registration Process

For an AO, the verification of his/her last name, date of birth, and SSN must be validated against the data maintained by NSC. The NSC received this AO data when the supplier completed their most recent CMS-855S Medicare Enrollment Application. The AO's last name is listed in Section 15 and the AO's date of birth and SSN in Section 6A of the CMS-855S. If the data does not match, the registration will be rejected.

Following successful registration, as an added measure of security, the AO's User ID and password is then mailed in a separate correspondence to the mailing address listed in Section 2A2 of the CMS-855S Medicare Enrollment Application.

The BAO goes through a similar process and an AO for the organization must approve a BAO's request for access before a User ID and password will be emailed to the BAO.

Do I need a BAO role?

The establishment of a BAO is highly recommended to avoid any disruption in the bidding process. The AO's role is instrumental to bidding, as the AO's role must be active to avoid all other users of the organization from losing access to the bidding system. If the AO leaves the organization, the BAO role can be changed to an AO role by the Competitive Bidding Implementation Contractor (CBIC).

You will want to verify that the CMS-855S Medicare Enrollment Application for your organization has two or more AOs listed.

Additional Information

For more information on the DMEPOS competitive bidding program, visit www.cms.hhs.gov/CompetitiveAcqforDMEPOS/ on the CMS website.

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