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CMS 270/271 (Eligibility) Extranet Transactions

Keywords

Eligibility inquiries, 270/271, Extranet, transaction, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), compliant, Medicare Data Communication Network (MDCN)

Provider Types Affected

Physicians, providers, suppliers, and clearinghouses making HIPAA compliant 270 eligibility inquiries and receiving 271 eligibility responses via the Extranet

Background

- In June of 2005, CMS created the necessary database and infrastructure to provide a centralized HIPAA compliant 270/271 health care eligibility inquiry and response transaction in real-time. Currently approximately 2.5M provider eligibility transactions are processed this way weekly.
- Access to this eligibility transaction is through direct contact with the CMS Medicare Eligibility Integration Contractor.

Key Points

- The 270/271 eligibility Extranet transaction is being conducted by CMS over a private network and not the Internet.
- Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) at the provider contact centers may receive inquiries from providers and those acting on their behalf about the Extranet and gaining access to it.
- CSRs are only responsible for answering inquiries related to this transaction with regard to verifying the Common Working File (CWF) eligibility data.
- Eligibility data returned by the 270/271 transaction is obtained from a data store separate from CWF. Based on how data is exchanged between databases and the delay that may occur with the exchanges, in a limited number of cases CWF and the 270/271 eligibility data may not match.
- Medicare claims are processed based on eligibility data maintained by CWF.
- CSRs should refer all other inquiries that may include questions regarding the accuracy of the data returned by the 271 response to the **Medicare Customer Assistance Re: Eligibility**

(MCARE) Help Desk at 1-866-324-7315 or to the Extranet web site at <http://cms.hhs.gov/HETShelp>.

- The Extranet web site contains resources for Extranet users, including general information, all associated forms and documents, identified data issues and timeframes for data correction, if known.

Additional Information

- Clearinghouses are actively marketing the 270/271 Extranet transaction to providers. Because of the costs associated with electronic transactions, many providers purchase claims transactions from clearinghouses and authorize them to conduct these transactions on their behalf.
- Many clearinghouses offer providers access to the data acquired for them over the Extranet via the Internet. CMS does not prohibit this. Clearinghouses are held accountable for protecting the data and adhering to the HIPAA Privacy and Security Rule.

Important Links

- Information about the Extranet and obtaining access is located at <http://cms.hhs.gov/HETShelp>.