

National Provider Identifier (NPI)

What is the National Provider Identifier (NPI)?

- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) mandated that the Secretary of Health and Human Services adopt a standard unique health identifier for health care providers. This standard unique health identifier is the National Provider Identifier (NPI).
- Once implemented, covered entities (including Medicare) will use only the NPI to identify health care providers in all standard transactions.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of HIPAA Compliance (OHC) is the lead on the project management, assessment, and remediation of this new identifier.

Important Dates

- The DHHS published the Final Rule on **January 23, 2004**, adopting the NPI as the Standard Unique Health Identifier of Health Care Providers. (45 CFR Part 162)
- The effective date of the Final Rule is **May 23, 2005**, 16 months after Final Rule Publication.
- The compliance date for all covered entities is **May 23, 2007**, except for small health plans, which have until **May 23, 2008** to comply.
- Beginning **May 23, 2005**, all health care providers can apply for their NPI.
- Between **May 23, 2005** and **January 2, 2006**, Medicare's claims processing systems will accept an existing legacy Medicare number and reject as unprocessable any claim that includes only an NPI.
- Between **January 3, 2006** and through **October 1, 2006**, Medicare's systems will accept an existing legacy Medicare number or an NPI, as long as an existing legacy Medicare number accompanies it.
- Beginning **October 2, 2006** and through **May 22, 2007**, Medicare's systems will accept an existing legacy Medicare number and/or an NPI. This allows for 6-7 months of provider testing before the Medicare program only accepts an NPI on May 23, 2007.
- Beginning **May 23, 2007**, Medicare's systems will only accept an NPI.

Requirements for NPI

- The NPI is a unique numeric 10-digit identifier, consisting of 9 numbers plus a check-digit in the 10th position. NPIs will initially be issued with the first digit = 1 or 2.
- The NPI will not have embedded intelligence (information about the health care provider that it identifies).
- The assigned NPI does not expire.
- At current rate of health care provider growth, NPI numbers can continue to be assigned for 200 years.

What are the Benefits of NPI?

- Reduce costs and improves efficiency.
- NPI eliminates the need for health care providers to maintain and use multiple identification numbers assigned by the various health plans they bill.

Who gets an NPI?

- All covered health care providers that need NPIs to submit claims or conduct other transactions specified by HIPAA must request an NPI.

National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES)

- The NPPES was built under a CMS contract.
- The NPPES will receive and process NPI applications and updates from providers.
- The NPPES generates the NPI and notifies providers of their NPIs.
- The NPPES ensures uniqueness of health care providers.
- The NPPES assists covered health care providers in completing applications and furnishes updates.
- The NPPES is responsible for resolving problems and answering questions.
- Please note: Your tax identification number can still be requested.

How will covered health care providers get their NPI?

- Covered health care providers will first need to determine who in their organization needs an NPI.
- Next, covered health care providers will need to complete an application form by paper or over Internet (www.nppes.cms.hhs.gov).
- The enumerator will assign an NPI to covered health care providers.

NPI Resources

- CMS Website (where you can find the latest NPI news for Fee-for-Service providers): www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand
- NPI Enumerator Website (where can apply for your NPI, or call 1-800-465-3203 to request a paper application): www.nppes.cms.hhs.gov
- January 21, 2004 Press Release: www.cms.hhs.gov/media/press/release.asp?Counter=946
- CMS NPI Resource page: www.cms.hhs.gov/hipaa/hipaa2/regulations/identifiers/default.asp