

## NATIONAL PROVIDER IDENTIFIER (NPI) INFORMATION

### What is the NPI?

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) required the adoption and use of a standard unique identifier for health care providers. The application period for an NPI began in May 2005, and the deadline for using the NPI is May 23, 2007. Benefits of the NPI include:

- Reduced costs and improved efficiency by eliminating the need for health care providers to maintain, keep track of, and use multiple health plan identification numbers
- More efficient coordination of benefits (COB) activities and more effective utilization review activities
- From an industry perspective, streamlined fraud and abuse efforts and better insulation of providers from potential cross-indexing errors that can occur with multiple identifiers
- Enhanced provider tracking for medical record needs and group practice debt collection efforts with use of a single identifier

The NPI replaces all "legacy" identifiers currently used, including Medicare and Medicaid numbers, Unique Physician Identification Number (UPIN), and other health plan proprietary numbers. However you still complete each payer's enrollment process. The NPI is a 10-position, intelligence-free numeric identifier (10-digit number). Intelligence-free means that the numbers do not carry other information about health care providers, such as the state in which they live or their medical specialty.

### Who must get an NPI?

All HIPAA covered healthcare providers, whether they are individuals or organizations, must obtain an NPI for use to identify themselves in HIPAA standard transactions. Once enumerated, a provider's NPI will not change. The NPI remains with the provider regardless of job or location changes. For NPI purposes, providers will fall into one of three categories:

- (1) *Covered* health care providers MUST get an NPI and use it in standard transactions no later than the compliance dates. As defined in the NPI rule, a covered health care provider is a health care provider that meets the definition in the covered entity definition in 45 CFR 160.103(3), i.e., a health care provider who transmits any health information in electronic form in connection with any of the HIPAA transactions. A covered health care provider must meet two tests: must be a health care provider as defined in the rule and must be a covered entity under HIPAA.
- (2) Some health care providers are not considered to be *covered* health care providers and may choose whether to get an NPI. Health plans such as Florida Medicaid are permitted to require these health care providers to obtain and use an NPI. Examples of health care providers who are not covered health care providers:
  - providers who only bill on paper claim forms and use no other electronic transactions,
  - providers submitting Worker Compensation or prison health care claims (not covered under HIPAA), or
  - nurses, dental hygienists, technicians, and similar providers who provide health care services but don't directly file claims or use other electronic transactions such as eligibility verification.
- (3) Some providers are not eligible for an NPI at all. These include
  - individuals or organizations that furnish atypical or nontraditional services that are only indirectly health care related, such as taxi, home and vehicle modifications, insect control, habilitation, and respite services, and
  - other individuals or organizations that only bill or receive payment for, but do not furnish, health care services or supplies, such as billing services, repricers, and value-added networks (may include EPOs and PSNs).

### Obtaining an NPI

You must obtain your new NPI number from the federal contractor for CMS, the NPI enumerator, through the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) located at: <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES/Welcome.do>. Additional information can be obtained from the Florida Medicaid HIPAA web site at: <http://www.fdhc.state.fl.us/Medicaid/hipaa/NPI/npi.shtml>, or the CMS NPI web page at: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/>. When applying for your NPI, CMS urges you to include your legacy identifiers for all payors. If reporting a Medicaid number, include the associated State name (Florida). This information is critical for payors in the development of crosswalks to aid in the transition to the NPI.