



## **Not Having Your National Provider Identifier (NPI) Can Be Costly! Avoid Claims Payment Disruption – Get It! Share It! Use It!**

As outlined in The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), you must obtain an NPI by May 23, 2008 if you bill TRICARE or Medicare for services. You must also share your NPI with other providers, health plans, clearinghouses, and any entity that may need it for billing purposes.

TriWest has compiled the following frequently asked questions about NPI to help you understand the importance of NPI and the possible disruptions to your practice or business if you are not prepared.

### **NPI Basics**

#### **1. What is a National Provider Identifier (NPI)?**

The administrative simplification provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) required the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to adopt a national standard identifier for health care providers for use in the health care industry. The NPI is a unique 10-digit numeric identifier assigned to health care providers and organizations defined as covered entities at 45 CFR §160.103. Once enumerated, a provider's NPI will not change. The NPI remains with the provider regardless of job or location changes. The NPI contains no embedded intelligence; that is, it contains no information about the health care provider such as the type of health care provider or state where the health care provider is located.

#### **2. Who should obtain an NPI?**

Any health care provider or organization defined as a covered entity under HIPAA is required to obtain an NPI. Providers who transmit health care information via HIPAA standard electronic transactions are covered entities under HIPAA, whether they transmit the transactions themselves or use a vendor or clearinghouse. Providers who do not utilize HIPAA standard electronic transactions are also encouraged to obtain an NPI.

#### **3. What is a covered entity and what is a non-covered entity?**

Covered entities: Health care providers who transmit standard electronic transactions (for example, claims submissions, referrals, etc.) are required by the HIPAA NPI regulation to apply for and receive an NPI prior to the May 23, 2008 compliance date. Covered entities may apply for a Type 1 or Type 2 NPI, depending on their status as a legal entity.

Non-covered entities: Providers whose services are not considered health care services and who do not meet the definition of health care provider as defined at 45 CFR §160.103.

#### **4. Who is assigned a Type 1 and a Type 2 NPI?**

A Type 1 NPI is assigned to individual health care providers, including physicians, dentists and all sole proprietors. A Type 2 NPI is assigned to health care providers who are organizations, including physician groups, hospitals, skilled nursing homes and the corporation formed when an individual incorporates him/herself. Organizations must determine if they have “subparts” that need to be uniquely identified in HIPAA standard transactions with their own NPIs.

#### **5. What is a Type 2 “Subpart”?**

Health care organizations that obtain a Type 2 NPI may elect to ‘subpart’ certain components of the organization. The use of Type 2 NPI subparts is not required. However, a healthcare organization that elects to subpart is required to limit usage to components that are not legal entities in themselves. For example, a hospital may assign subparts to departments within the organization when the departments use the same tax identifier.

#### **6. How can a health care provider or organization apply for an NPI?**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has contracted with a vendor to administer the assignment of NPIs and deal with health plans and providers on issues concerning unique identification. There are two ways a health care provider can apply for an NPI:

- Complete the application online at <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov>.
- Complete a paper copy by downloading it from <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov>, or by calling 1-800-465-3203 to request a copy.

#### **7. How do I submit my NPI to TriWest?**

Refer to the Your NPI Connection area of the Provider Connection area of [www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com) where network and non-network providers will find instructions on how to submit their NPI to TriWest, as well as other NPI resources.

#### **8. When should health care providers begin submitting their NPI to TriWest?**

Providers are encouraged to begin submitting their NPI on standard electronic transactions today. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that providers submit the NPI with all standard electronic transactions by the compliance date of May 23, 2008.

#### **9. What are the significant dates associated with applying for and using the NPI?**

- May 23, 2008: Date by which all health care providers who utilize HIPAA standard electronic transactions *must* have an NPI and use the NPI in all those transactions.
- May 23, 2008: Date by which TriWest and all other health plans and payers must have the capability to use the NPI to identify providers in standard electronic transactions.

#### **10. Why should I submit my NPI prior to May 23, 2008?**

Sharing your NPI in advance of the implementation date reduces the possibility for delayed claims payments.

#### **11. What are standard electronic transactions?**

- 837P – Professional claim
- 837I – Institutional Health claims
- 270 – Eligibility Benefit Inquiry

- 271 – Eligibility Benefit Response
- 835 – Health care remittance advice
- 276 – Health claim status inquiry
- 277 – Health claim status response
- 278 – Health care Services and Response

## **NPI Details**

### **12. What will an NPI do?**

- Replace all other provider identifiers previously used by health care providers (for example, UPIN, Medicare/Medicaid numbers, etc.)
- Establish a national standard and unique identifier for all health care providers
- Simplify the administration of the health care system and encourage the electronic transmission of health care information

### **13. What will an NPI NOT do?**

- Replace the tax identification number (TIN), which is an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requirement
- Convey information about the provider (for example, provider type, service location, etc.)
- Guarantee reimbursement by health plans
- Enroll providers in health plans

### **14. Are Durable Medical Equipment (DME) providers required to have an NPI?**

Medicare Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS) suppliers are required to obtain an NPI for every location. The only exception to this requirement is the situation in which a Medicare DME supplier is a sole proprietor. A sole proprietor is eligible for only one NPI (the individual's NPI) regardless of the number of locations the supplier may have. Federal regulations require the unique enumeration of every location of a Medicare DME supplier regardless of how claims are submitted. TRICARE is following Medicare's guidelines for DMEPOS suppliers. For more information on Medicare Subpart Expectations, please visit the Medicare Subpart Guidance Paper at [www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov)

### **15. Are NPIs required on referral/authorization requests?**

TriWest prefers, but does not require, the NPI of the referring provider, the servicing provider and the facility, if applicable, on referral and authorization requests.

## **NPI Claims Submission**

### **16. Will EDI claims submitted without NPI after May 23, 2008, be denied?**

Yes. The only exception to this will be claims submitted by 'atypical providers.' An atypical provider is an individual or organization that provides nontraditional services that are indirectly health care related (e.g., those under the Extended Care Health Option [ECHO] program). Under HIPAA, these providers are not eligible to receive an NPI and will not be submitting claims with an NPI.

**17. Will paper claims submitted without NPI after May 23, 2008, be denied?**

At this time, the NPI is not required for paper claims; however, TriWest strongly prefers that paper claims be submitted with an NPI.

**18. Is the May 23 deadline for claims received at Wisconsin Physicians Services (WPS) or the date of service?**

The deadline is for claims received at WPS after 12 midnight, May 23, 2008, Central Time.

**19. Will I need to submit both my NPI and my TIN on my claims?**

Yes, claims submitted without TINs will be denied as the TIN is still required for IRS purposes.

**20. Do I need to submit my claim with the NPI of the referring provider?**

No, TRICARE does not require the name of the referring provider to adjudicate the claim. However, please check with your system vendor and clearinghouse to assure that they can transit your claims without the referring provider's NPI.

**21. How do I get the NPI for a referring civilian healthcare provider?**

Currently TRICARE has not authorized TriWest to share the NPIs for civilian providers. Please contact the referring provider if your system requires that information or go to <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov>.

**NPI Resources**

**22. Where can I get additional information about NPI from TriWest?**

There is an entire section of [www.triwest.com/provider](http://www.triwest.com/provider) dedicated to NPI – Your NPI Connection. There are resources for network and non-network providers about NPI as well as resources about obtaining and sharing your NPI with TriWest.

**23. Where can I get additional information about NPI from TriWest?**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has put together several resources to help providers understand the National Provider Identifier (NPI) that providers must obtain by May 23, 2008. CMS also developed a training package for NPI to assist providers with self-education, as well as education of staff. This package is also useful to national and local medical societies for group presentations and training. These resources are available on the CMS Web site at [www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov). The CMS website also contains additional information about HIPAA NPI regulations.

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The CMS website, [www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov), contains additional information about HIPAA NPI regulations.

**Remember Your NPI: Get It! Share It! Use It!**