

Medicare Deadlines

Starting March 1, all physicians who file Medicare claims electronically must use their national provider identifiers. Starting May 23, Medicare and all other payers will require the NPI alone on all electronic claims. Here's what the AMA is recommending physicians do to make sure they're ready:

Start using the NPI. Send a few small test claims right away using only the NPI to determine if Medicare and other payers will accept it.

Watch for NPI warnings. Starting last summer, Medicare began issuing informational warnings on claims for physicians whose new NPI information did not match with information attached to their old IDs. Until these discrepancies are resolved, NPI use will result in claims rejections.

Validate NPI information. Visiting the NPI Web site (<https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/>) or calling the NPI enumerator at 800-465-3203 can determine whether a physician's NPI information is correct. Calling the Medicare carrier can confirm whether the carrier has the correct information in its system.

Re-enroll in Medicare if needed. Physicians who find out they need additional Medicare PINs to match to their new NPIs can complete this process through their carriers.

Keep NPI information up to date. Physicians are required to report changes to their NPI information within 30 days of the change.

Source: American Medical News (AMNews) January 14, 2008.