National Provider Identifier (NPI): Get it. Share it. Use it.

In accordance with the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, the Secretary of Health and Human Services published a final rule in January 2004 adopting a new identifier – known as the National Provider Identifier (NPI) – to be used within the healthcare industry.

Healthcare providers that engage in certain standard electronic transactions, such as claims, remittance advice and eligibility requests, must obtain an NPI and use it within these transactions by May 23, 2007. Small health plans have until May 23, 2008, to comply. The 10-digit NPI replaces other provider identifiers, such as HMSA provider numbers and the Medicare UPIN.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is responsible for oversight and management of the NPI system. CMS has contracted with Fox Systems to operate the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES or “the Enumerator”), a computer system that will process applications and updates, ensure the uniqueness of the healthcare provider and generate NPIs.

Get it.

There are three ways providers can apply for an NPI:

1. Complete an online application. Visit [https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES/Welcome.do](https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES/Welcome.do) and click the National Provider Identifier (NPI) link. When you are directed to the next page, click Apply Online for an NPI to access the online application.

2. Call 1 (800) 465-3203 or 1 (800) 692-2326 (TTY) to request a hard-copy application from the Enumerator. Mail the completed application according to the instructions on the form.

3. Permit an organization, referred to as an electronic file interchange organization (EFIO), to apply for an NPI on your behalf. The EFIO may bulk enumerate for a number of providers affiliated with its organization by submitting an electronic file interchange to NPPES. The Enumerator assigns an NPI to each provider in the group and returns the information directly to the EFIO. The EFIO will then inform its affiliated providers of their NPIs.

NPPES statistics indicate that as of September 18, 2006, about 57 percent of Hawaii’s providers have registered for their NPI. Although Medicare has set an implementation deadline of May 23, 2007, HMSA encourages all covered entities to apply for their NPI immediately if they have not already done so.
Share it.
When you receive your NPI from NPPES, it is important to provide this information to HMSA as soon as possible. Many database and system updates must be completed before HMSA can properly process EDI transactions with NPIs rather than existing HMSA provider identification numbers.

To share your NPI with HMSA, please follow these steps:

1. Write your NPI in the space provided on the enclosed NPI information form. If you receive more than one form, carefully review the instructions and submit the requested information. Do not assume you have received a duplicate form.

2. Attach a copy of the confirmation you received verifying your NPI. This confirmation could be an e-mail or letter directly from NPPES, or it may be the notification you received from an EFIO that obtained an NPI on your behalf.

3. Verify and update the addresses listed on the NPI information form as outlined in the instructions at the top of the form. **Note:** If you forward address updates to HMSA, notify your vendor to ensure the information in your claims processing software matches what you submitted to HMSA.

4. Forward these items to HMSA by mail or fax using the enclosed return mail envelope or the NPI Information fax cover sheet.

Please be assured that HMSA will collect, use and disclose NPIs only in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

HMSA may need to request additional NPI information from providers in the future. Therefore, it is essential you read all HMSA NPI communications closely to ensure your information has been captured accurately.

Use it.
HMSA will be ready to accept EDI transactions with NPIs around the beginning of 2007, though a final date has not been set. HMSA will update providers in the near future indicating when we will be able to accept claims and other EDI transactions with your NPIs rather than existing HMSA provider IDs. Please do not submit electronic transactions with your NPI until you have been notified by HMSA to do so.

For more information about NPI, refer to the CMS website at [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/). HMSA also has posted information about NPI in the **FAQ** section of the HMSA Provider Resource Center.