



Do you have your NPI? National Provider Identifiers (NPIs) will be required on claims sent on or after May 23, 2007. Every health care provider needs to get an NPI. Learn more about the NPI and how to apply for an NPI by visiting <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/> on the CMS website.

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VMS Standard System Unavailability for Durable Medical Equipment Regional Carriers (DMERCs)

Provider Types Affected

All suppliers who submit claims to Medicare DMERCs

Background

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is using this Special Edition (SE) 0640 to alert suppliers that the Medicare claims processing standard system (VMS), which processes DME claims, is undergoing an update and will be unavailable during the system cutover and system conversion activities between June 28 and July 3, 2006.

Key Points

During the update, VMS will not be available for claims processing and appeals activities, or to respond to inquiries, and therefore is considered "dark."

Suppliers and submitters will not be able to check the status of their claims or appeals through Interactive Voice Response (IVR), claims status inquiry systems, or customer service centers.

Suppliers and submitters may submit claims for payment during "dark" days; however, electronic claims submitted after the final cycle is started for Regions A and B must contain the new DME Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC)

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Jurisdiction A or B contractor identification number, or the claim will be rejected. (For more information regarding the new DME MACs, please see *MLN Matters* article SE0628, available at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0628.pdf> on the CMS website.)

- The number of “dark” days for each DME contractor at cutover is outlined in the table below:

VMS Standard System Unavailable “Dark” Days

Region	DMERC Contractor #	Last Cycle Date	Standard System Unavailable	Begin EMC Receipt New Contractor #	DMAC Operational 7/3/06
A	HealthNow-811	6/27/06	6/28-30	6/28	NHIC-16003
B	AdminaStar-635	6/27/06	6/28-30	6/27	AdminaStar-17003
C	Palmetto GBA-885	6/27/06	6/28-30	NA	NA
D	CIGNA-5655	6/30/06	7/3	NA	NA

As noted above, the unavailability of VMS during the “dark days” affects the information available to customer service representatives (CSRs) and the IVR to handle supplier inquiries. The table below summarizes the affected dates and what customer service options will or will not be available at the DMERCs or at the DMACs for July 1-2, 2006.

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Supplier Customer Service Availability During VMS "Dark Days"

Jurisdiction	DMERC/DMAC Contractor #	Customer Service Availability	Applicable Dates
A	HealthNow-811 NHIC - 16003	Contact center closed (no CSRs available) No IVR access, not even general information	6/28-7/2
B	AdminaStar-635 AdminaStar-17003	Contact center closed (no CSRs available) No IVR access, not even general information	6/28-7/2
C	Palmetto GBA-885	Contact center closed (no CSRs available) No IVR access, not even general information	6/28-7/2
D	CIGNA-5655	Contact center closed (no CSRs available) IVR access only to general information	7/3

Additional Information

If you have questions, please contact your DMERC at their toll-free number, which may be found at

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/CallCenterTollNumDirectory.zip>
on the CMS website.

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