



# For Healthcare Providers Who Are Individuals

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Are you drowning in a sea of provider numbers? Do you have to keep track of many different identifiers, provider numbers, and provider identification numbers? Do you forget which number to use with which payer? If so, help is on the way!

In authority delegated by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is pleased to announce the availability of the standard unique health identifier for health care providers. This new identifier, the National Provider Identifier (NPI), is a single health care provider identifier that will replace the provider identifier(s) you currently use in the standard transactions that you conduct with each health plan with which you do business. The NPI was adopted by the Secretary in accordance with the requirement of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) that the Secretary adopt a standard unique health identifier for health care providers. This identifier must be used by all HIPAA covered entities, which are health plans, health care clearinghouses, and those health care providers who transmit any health data in connection with a transaction for which the Secretary has adopted a standard (known as standard transactions). All HIPAA covered entities must accept and use NPIs in standard transactions by May 23, 2007 (small health plans have until May 23, 2008). After those compliance dates, covered health care providers will use only their NPIs to identify themselves in standard transactions where a health care provider identifier is required.

CMS now has a web page dedicated to the NPI: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProviderStand/>. This site contains links to a wealth of general NPI information. Check this site often for updates. From this site, you can:

- Read the CMS NPI “Dear Provider” letter from CMS Administrator, Dr. Mark B. McClellan;
- Link to the latest NPI information, including Medlearn Matters articles;
- Learn how to apply for your NPI;
- Use the NPI Viewlet, an instructional web tool for completing the paper NPI application;
- Familiarize yourself with Medicare’s timeline for NPI implementation;
- View statistics from the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES);
- Discover educational material, including the NPI Final Rule and Frequently Asked Questions;
- Learn more about HIPAA and HIPAA’s Administrative Simplifications; and
- Much more, all in one convenient location.

**Get enumerated.** You may apply for your NPI using an easy web-based application process by going to the **NPPES web site:** <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES/Welcome.do>. This site also contains a link to the downloadable paper application (if you prefer to use the paper form to apply) and contact information if you have questions. An employer or other organization with whom you are affiliated may obtain an NPI for you, with your permission, through the electronic file interchange (EFI) (bulk enumeration) process.

**Important NPI Note:** A sole proprietor/sole proprietorship is an Individual and is eligible for a single NPI. The sole proprietor must apply for the NPI using his or her own SSN, not an EIN even if he/she has an EIN. Because a sole proprietor/sole proprietorship is an Individual, he/she cannot be a subpart and cannot designate subparts.

## Information Required to Obtain Your NPI

For providers who are Individuals:

Provider Name	Provider Date of Birth
Country of Birth	State of Birth (if Country of Birth is U.S.)
Provider Gender	SSN or other proof of identity
Mailing Address	Practice Location Address and Phone Number
Taxonomy (Provider Type)	State License Information *
Contact Person Name	Contact Person Phone Number and E-mail

\* (required for certain taxonomies only)

Note: Taxonomy codes describe provider type/classification/specialization of Individual and Organization health care providers. A complete list of taxonomy codes is available from the Washington Publishing Company and can be found at <http://www.wpc-edi.com/codes/taxonomy>.

## Important Advice Concerning Your National Provider Identifier (NPI):

- **Take control of your NPI.** If you are a billing provider, your NPI will be your **billing number**. Your NPI does not belong to your employer or to any health plan, even if your employer or a health plan obtained it for you by bulk enumeration. It is the one number that identifies you as a health care provider in standard transactions with other health care providers, health plans, and health care clearinghouses.
- **Use your NPI.** After May 23, 2007, **the NPI will be the only health care provider identifier** that you or health plans will use to identify you as a health care provider in standard transactions, such as claims and encounter information transactions, coordination of benefits transactions, claims status inquiries/responses, eligibility inquiries/responses, payment and remittance advices, enrollment/disenrollment in health plans, and referrals. Your NPI will be used by all health plans, including Medicare, Medicaid, and all other private and public payers, to identify you as a health care provider.
- **Protect your NPI.** As an Individual **you are eligible for only one NPI** regardless of the number of different places you furnish health care or the number of different contracts you may have with health plans and other health care providers. Your NPI is yours for life and will never expire or be recycled and assigned to a different health care provider. Only in rare and unique circumstances, such as fraudulent use of your NPI by another, will you be able to contact the NPI Enumerator in order to obtain a new NPI to replace the one that was initially assigned to you.
- **Take care of your NPI.** You are responsible for updating NPI-related information with NPPES, the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System. If you are a covered health care provider, you must report any changes to any of the information that was furnished to obtain your NPI **within 30 days of the change**.
- **Share your NPI as needed.** There are certain covered entities and **others who will need to know your NPI in order to conduct standard transactions**. These may include, but may not be limited to, your employer, hospitals where you have privileges, and health care providers to whom you refer patients. These health care providers cannot be reimbursed unless they know your NPI so that they can use it in the standard claims transactions that they conduct. Also, health plans in which you are enrolled and to whom you submit claims need to know your NPI; they need to associate it with your enrollment information in order to ensure you receive proper payment for services rendered.

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