

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
Social Security Number Removal Initiative  
Open Door Forum  
Moderator: Jill Darling  
March 28, 2017  
2:00 p.m. ET

Operator: Good afternoon. My name is (Kim) and I will be your conference facilitator today. At this time, I would like to welcome everyone to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Social Security Number Removal Initiative Open Door Forum.

All lines have been placed on mute to prevent any background noise. After the speaker's remarks, there will be a question and answer session. If you would like to ask a question during this time, simply press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. If you would like to withdraw your question, press the pound key.

Thank you. Ms. Jill Darling, you may begin your conference.

Jill Darling: Thank you (Kim). Good morning and good afternoon everyone. My name is Jill Darling in the CMS Office of Communication. Thank you for joining us today for the first SSNRI Open Door Forum of 2017.

Before we get into the agenda, one brief announcement from me. This open door forum is not intended for the press and the remarks are not considered on the record. If you are a member of the press, you may listen in but please refrain from asking questions during the Q&A portion of the call. If you have any inquiries, please contact CMS at [press@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:press@cms.hhs.gov).

For those who did get the agenda, there is a link which is a YouTube link for slides as our speaker, Monica Kay, so it is time. So if you have that available, please follow along with Monica. So now I will hand it off to Monica.

Monica Kay: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Monica Kay and I'm with the Office of Information Technology and we're coming to you again with the Social Security Number Removal Initiative or SSRNI. We have a couple of updates to share with you.

So for some of you, you may have heard some of the information already and for others it may be new to you. So, we're going to go ahead and get started with the background information and then we'll go into the updated information that we would like to share.

So as we have mentioned earlier on previous open door forum, the health insurance claim number is a Medicare beneficiaries' identification number. It's used for paying claims and for determining the eligibility services across multiple entities such as Social Security Administration, the Railroad Retirement Board, states, our Medicare providers and health plans.

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 mandated the removal of the Social Security Number-based HICN from the Medicare cards to address the risk of beneficiary medical identity theft. The legislative requires that CMS must mail out new Medicare cards with the new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier or MBI by April of 2019.

Some of our program's goal includes our primary goal which is to decrease Medicare beneficiaries' vulnerability to identity theft by removing that SSN-based HICN from their Medicare identifications cards and replacing that HICN with a new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier or MBI. And we wanted to do so with the following goals.

We want to minimize our burdens for beneficiaries, minimize our burden for providers, minimize disruption to our Medicare operations, and provide a solution for our business partners that allow the usage of Health Insurance Claim Number or HICN and/or MBI for our critical business data exchanges. Then of course, we have to manage the cost, scope, and schedule for our project.

Some of the systems that are affected by this initiative include our systems that are 75 and over in nature. We're also going to conduct extensive education and outreach activities, and we also have to analyze the many changes that will be needed for our systems and business processes.

Our affected stakeholders include our federal partners, states, beneficiaries, providers such as yourself, and plans, as well as other key stakeholders, such as our billing agencies, advocacy groups and data warehouses. We have been working closely with our partners and stakeholders to implement the Social Security Number Removal Initiative.

So now we're going to talk about the implementation of SSNRI. Our concept for the new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier or MBI must have the following capabilities. We must generate MBIs for all beneficiaries. This includes existing, active, deceased or archived as well as new beneficiaries coming into our program.

We have to issue new redesigned Medicare cards. These new cards will contain the MBI for our existing and new beneficiaries. Third, we must modify our systems and business processes and that requires the update to accommodate the receipt, transmission, display and processing of that new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier or MBI.

CMS anticipates using an MBI generator to assign 150 million MBIs in our initial enumeration. This includes 60 million active and 90 million deceased or archived MBI, as well as generate a unique MBI for each new Medicare beneficiary. We will also generate a new unique MBI for a Medicare beneficiary whose identity has been compromised.

As we examined the differences between the health insurance claim number and the Medicare Beneficiary Identifier Number, you can see this on slide 7. The Health Insurance Claim Number or HICN is the Primary Beneficiary Account Holder Social Security Number plus a Beneficiary Identification Code or BIC is a 9-byte Social Security Number plus a 1 or 2-byte BIC. And the key positions 1 through 9 are numeric.

Our new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier or MBI is a new non-intelligent identifier. It will also be 11-byte and key positions 2, 5, 8 and 9 will always be alphabetic. If you're looking or referencing the slide, you'll see examples of the two, the SSA HICN versus the MBI. Please note on those slides that the identifiers are fictitious and the dashes are for display purposes only and will not be stored in database or use in file format.

As we talked about the MBI characteristics, they have the following, excuse me, a characteristics that will be displayed. It has the same number of characters that – that it has the current HICN which is 11 but will be visibly distinguishable from the HICN. It will contain uppercase alphabetic and numeric characters throughout the 11 digit identifier. It will occupy the same field as the HICN on transactions.

The biggest difference is that it will be unique to each beneficiary. For example, the husband and wife will have their own MBI. The MBI will be easy to read and limit the possibilities of letters being interpreted as numbers. The alphabetic characters are upper case only and will exclude the letters S, L, O, I, B and Z.

Another significant difference is that the MBI will not contain any embedded intelligence or special characters nor will it contain any inappropriate combinations of numbers or strings that may be offensive. CMS anticipates that the MBI will not be changed for individual unless the MBI has been compromised or for other limited circumstances that are still undergoing review.

Now we're going to talk about MBI generation and our transition period. CMS has identified a 21-month transition period that will (span) to help us institute the new MBI. In January of 2018, we will activate the MBI generator and translation services. April 2018 through December 31st of 2019 is our transition period.

And during that period, CMS will accept and process both the HICN and MBI on transaction. CMS anticipates mailing the first cards in April of 2018 through May of 2019. And as of December 31st of 2019, the Health

Insurance Claim Number or HICN will no longer be exchanged with beneficiaries, providers, plans and other third-party with exceptions, which we will note in a few slides.

So as we're talking about the transition period, CMS anticipates that it will complete its system and process update to be ready to accept and return to MBI as of April 1st of 2018. All stakeholders who submit or received transactions containing the HICN must modify their processes and systems to be ready to submit or exchange to MBI by April 1st of 2018 as that's the time that we anticipate our card mailing.

Stakeholders may submit either the MBI or the Health Insurance Claim Number of HICN during the transition period. CMS will accept use for processing and return to stakeholders either the MBI or the HICN whichever is submitted during the transition period. And in addition, beginning in October of 2018 through the end of the transition period when a valid and active HICN is submitted on the Medicare fee for service claims, both the HICN and MBI will be returned on the remittance advice. And as I stated previously, the transition period will run from April of 2018 through December 31st of 2019.

Now let's talk about some of those exceptions that we will have after the transition period, where we will still be able to use the Health Insurance Claim number and it will be only for these scenarios. The first area is appeals. You will use the HICN for appeals when you originally submitted a HICN on a claim.

You can use the HICN for a report that includes incoming report to CMS. For example, quality reporting, disproportionate share hospital data request and outgoing reports from CMS. That includes provider, statistical and reimbursement report or Accountable Care Organization report. You can also use the HICN for retroactive enrollment and (span) date claims.

And as an example of those it includes the 11X inpatient hospital, 32X home health and 41X religious non-medical. And it also includes those claims from the religious non-Medicare healthcare institutions with claims that have a

(from) date that is prior to the end of the transition period which is 12/31/19. You will be able to use a HICN for adjustments and you can use that HICN for adjustments when you originally submitted a HICN on the claim.

And an example of that would be the risk adjustment and encounter data (or PD). You may use the HICN for incoming information request and the HICN will also be used for our incoming premium payments that are made by our beneficiaries. And again, I want you to note that for the incoming report to CMS, we will use the HICN on these reports until we – until further notice.

Now let's talk about the SSNRI card issuance. CMS will begin issuing new Medicare cards for our existing beneficiaries after the initial enumeration of MBIs which is roughly 60 million beneficiaries. The gender and signature line will be removed from the new Medicare cards. The Railroad Retirement Board who will also issue their own cards to their RRB beneficiaries will also have the MBI.

We will continue to work with states that currently include the HICN on their Medicare Card to remove it, to replace it with the new Medicare ID or replace it with an MBI. And then of course CMS will conduct intensive education and outreach to all of our Medicare beneficiaries and their agents to help them prepare for this change. CMS will provide outreach and education to approximately 60 million beneficiaries, their agents, advocacy groups and caregivers.

We will also provide outreach and education to health plans, the provider community, such as yourself, states and territories as well as our key stakeholders, vendors and other partners. And we will continue to ensure that we involve all of our stakeholders in our outreach and education efforts through our existing vehicles for communication such as open door such as this, HPS notices and other communications.

You can find out our operational information on the Social Security Number Removal Initiative from the following areas. Our open door forum which we plan to hold quarterly, our industry conferences which include (WIDI), (HIM), the National Association for Rural Health Clinics, our Medicaid

Enterprise Systems Conferences and our Healthcare Billing Manager Association.

And of course through our current communications with CMS which was stated before, any technical communications that you may already be receiving. And lastly, you can find information from our cms.gov Web site which is our <http://go.cms.gov/ssnri> and this information can also be found on our open door forum – link provided by YouTube.

So, the question that you need to understand is what do I need to do? So you're participating the first time but in our open door forum in asking questions to help – to get you prepared. You're also – we're also asking that you obtain technical information on SSNRI from your regular communication channels. And then of course, please check our Web site often for our SSNRI updated information.

I wanted to thank you for participating in this discussion today and if you have any other questions or concerns after our Q&A session, please submit any additional information through our SSNRI team mailbox at [SSNRemoval@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:SSNRemoval@cms.hhs.gov). I have a number of CMS colleagues with me that can help to address some of your technical questions or programmatic questions. Thank you Jill.

Jill Darling: All right, thanks Monica and (Kim), we'll go into our Q&A please.

Operator: Thank you. As a reminder, ladies and gentlemen, if you would like to ask a question, please press star and the number one on your telephone keypad. If you would like to withdraw your question, please press the pound key. Please limit your questions to one question and one follow-up to allow other participants time for questions. If you require any further follow-up, you may press star one again to rejoin the queue.

Your first question comes from the line of (Roger Daly) from Baptist Health South. Your line is open.

(Roger Daly): Yes, can you hear me? I wanted to ask if – how will providers look up the MBI number when 90 percent of the patients come in the emergency room without a Medicare card?

(Crosstalk)

Tricia Rodgers: Hi, thank you for ...

(Crosstalk)

(Roger Daly): Any answer?

Tricia Rodgers: Yes, thank you. This is Tricia Rodgers and – and while we originally said that providers would need to get their MBI from patients at the point of service, we heard your concern during our feedback sessions and open door forums and things like that. So beginning in October 2018 through the end of our transition period, we'll provide the MBI on the remittance advice when a provider submits a claim using a valid and active HICN.

In addition to this, we have a lengthy transition period where you can submit either the HICN or the MBI on claims for reimbursement. And that is from April 2018 through December 31st, 2019. We're also committed to giving extensive outreach to remind patients to bring their new cards with them to all of their healthcare service visits.

And then in addition to this, we'll also let you know in the message field when you do an eligibility transaction inquiry; we'll let you know in the message field on that response when we mail the card to the patient, to your patients, so that you're aware when they should have their card.

(Roger Daly): Okay. All right, sounds good.

Operator: Again. If you would like to ask a question, please press star and the number one on your telephone keypad. Your next question comes from the line of (Debbie Fox) from (Mikasa). Your line is open.

(Debbie Fox): Thank you. I wanted to understand a little bit more information in regards to the generation of the MBIs for deceased patients. What are the plans for using that? Are the cards going to be sent to someone in the family member? I'm just trying to understand a little bit more about those plans, thank you.

Monica Kay: Hi, this is Monica Kay from OIT. Medicare cards will only be sent to existing beneficiaries that are alive, so that's the answer to the first question. And in answering the second question, a lot of the information for deceased beneficiaries as used for research purposes and those organizations that need to have the MBI for research purposes we will be sharing that of with them. Does that answer your question?

(Debbie Fox): Yes, it does. Thank you very much.

Operator: And there are no further questions at this time. And we do have another question from (Sheryl Newton) with Manatee Memorial Hospital. Your line is open.

(Sheryl Newton): I want to commend you actually for issuing the MBI to the deceased because identity theft is prevalent whether you're dead or alive, so the susceptibility for identity theft and deceased individuals, is it – is it concerning so this is a good thing. I just want to comment that being from a State of Florida where our patient traffic isn't static. It's very transient. They don't live here. They visit here. Some of them are here for a couple months and so we have big huge patient base of infrequent repeat customers, so it seems to me a real challenge to be able to gather this information for the new MBI, I don't know it seems to be like it's going to be a pretty much of a challenge for us.

Monica Kay: So, thank you for your question. I'll start it and then I'll hand it off to Tricia to add to it. Just to clarify, we're only issuing the new redesign Medicare Card to new and existing beneficiaries but everyone who has ever been in Medicare will be assigned a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier. So, I just wanted to make that clarification and just in terms of transient – and transient people or customers, the patients that you may have, again we're having a transition period that will spend 21 months where you can – you will have a way to collect that data and when someone does present to you, a HICN we will be

returning on the remittance advice, so I'll also ask Tricia if she has anything else to add.

Tricia Rodgers: Yes, I would just add that, as you know, we are going to do a lot of outreach and education to your patients and their caregivers to remind them to bring their new cards with them with the MBI on it, so after the transition period is over, they'll be used to bringing their cards with them for every visit and you will have a way to then bill under the new MBI. During the transition period as Monica said you can – you can bill the new HICN or the MBI. Thank you so much for your comment.

(Sheryl Newton): Thank you.

Operator: And your next question comes from the line of (Dimitri Standards) with Express Scripts. Your line is open.

(Dimitri Standards): Hi, thank you. My question is specific to the guidance. It – I think the language that was released that we would have draft guidance in the spring and the final guidance in the fall, do we have anything former on when those – when the guidance will be released?

Monica Kay: So, hi. This is Monica again. And they are working on addressing additional technical guidance and please stay tune for any HPMS notices, I'm assuming you're referring to plan information. There will be additional guidance coming shortly.

(Dimitri Standards): Thank you.

Operator: And your next question comes from the line of (Laura Doner) with (Kessen Corp). Your line is open.

(Laura Doner): We were interested in the new cards themselves whether they would either be tipped enabled or whether or whether they might have a magnetic strip has that been decided yet?

Monica Kay: Hi. This is Monica and thank you for your question. They will be – they will not be tipped enabled nor would they have a magnetic strip. They will be just

paper cards that you see today with the new MBI number and remember I stated before the gender and signature line will be removed.

(Laura Doner): Thank you.

Operator: And your next question comes from the line of (Amy Leonard) with (Mikasa Corporation). Your line is open.

(Amy Leonard): Yes, good afternoon. My question is in reference to the exceptions of accepting the HIC Number after the transition period. I noticed that we had a number of exception areas and I just want to get some clarification on that, for instance the appeal is one of those that if you are appealing a claim and you submitted the HIC Number on the initial claim indicated you could resubmit or submit your appeal with HIC Number, my question is can you submit the appeal with the MBI Number if for instance many appeal sometimes in recoveries do not occur for several years later the beneficiary may have been in more additional visits with their new MBI number so my question would be is can you absolutely process an appeal or an adjustment or span date claim with the MBI Number if the HIC Number was used on the original claim?

Monica Kay: So, thank you for your question. Let us take that back and I will also ask if you can send us that exact question to the [ssnremoval@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:ssnremoval@cms.hhs.gov).

(Amy Leonard): Thank you.

Monica Kay: Thank you.

Operator: And again to ask a question, please press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. Your next question comes from the line of (Joan Shortcut) with Express Scripts. Your line is open.

(Joan Shortcut): Hi, I was wondering if – if we were going to get a first one-time (cross work file) of all the – of all the MBI numbers for – for the members whether it's to, you know, the plan or the PBM but if the first time too or going to get a first time, you know, file or is it just going to be a monthly file where we'll have HICN and the MBI Number?

Monica Kay: Hi. This is Monica Kay. A specific guidance for the plans will be coming out soon, that will provide information.

(Joan Shortcut): OK, great. Thank you.

Operator: And your next question comes from the line of (Karen McCain) with Baptist Hospital. Your line is open.

(Karen McCain): Hi, good afternoon. I have two questions in regards to the new SSNRIs. When we have Medicare Advantage Members and they come in as inpatient admissions, we're required to submit a shadow claim to Medicare and how will we be able to identify the Medicare Number in order to do that? And number two, we also have a very high volume of clinical trial patients and those are under Medicare Advantage when a clinical trial diagnosis code is issued those claims or to go to traditional Medicare, how would we be able to identify who to bill?

Monica Kay: Hi. This is Monica again and please I would ask that you submit those specific questions, those are planned questions and we want to be...

(Karen McCain): OK.

Monica Kay: CMS will be able to capture that information and that is put into future guidance that will be coming out.

(Karen McCain): OK.

Monica Kay: I ask that you send that question to the [ssnremoval@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:ssnremoval@cms.hhs.gov).

(Karen McCain): OK, we'll do.

Monica Kay: Thank you so much.

(Karen McCain): Thank you.

Operator: And your next question comes from the line of (Claudia Garvelli). Your line is open from Health Bill Hospital.

(Claudia Garvelli): Hello and good afternoon and thank you for all the hard work that everybody is doing and also thanks to people who are calling in with very good questions, the Medicare Advantage is a good one, the zero pay bill. I just wanted just to reiterate, you know, when patients are coming in to the emergency room, they are flustered, they passed out, people go to the house later to try to find the Medicare Card they can't find the Medicare Card.

There's also people – of people going on, I just want to share my concerns that's going to be very, very difficult and time consuming, I'm just very concern about hospitals and other providers who are trying to find that Medicare Number maybe after the – after the transition period or even during the transition period if that patient has never been there before, how will we get that number? You know, yes both of our patients are repeats patients across the country but sometimes they're not or urgent care centers, emergency rooms are big – are big areas concern for me personally, so I just want to sure then. Thank you very much.

Tricia Rodgers: Thank you. This is Tricia Rodgers. Thank you so much (Claudia) for your comment. So, during the transition period, you can submit – if they've never been there before you can I would encourage you to use the same process that you use today. If they come in to the hospital in the E.R. specifically and they don't have their card with them, what process do you follow today, you know, continue to follow these processes and their caregivers, can possibly can go home and find their card and bring it in.

During the transition period, obviously, you can use either the HICN or the MBI to submit the claim and then after the transition period you will need to submit the MBI. Along with our beneficiary outreach to –your patients and their caregivers, we'll be encouraging them to make sure that their caregivers have the MBI information to give at emergency situations and other type of instances where the beneficiary may not be able to communicate as well.

And so we are – we are trying to touch each of these points that you've raised and give you information on how to handle those, but I would encourage you to follow the processes that you use today when this happens when they don't have their card with them. Thank you very much.

(Claudia Garvelli): Tricia, thank you very much. The issue is that currently right now with other – with other payers, we can – we can enquire – as long as we have sufficient information, we can enquire and get it – and get the correct number to bill. And currently for Medicare for 99 percent of the time, we can use the patient Social Security Number or their spouses and mess around with the different suffixes and we can eventually get it. So, that's our big issue so just wanted to share that but thank you very much and we appreciate your effort.

Operator: And again, ladies and gentlemen, if you would like to ask a question, please press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. Your next question comes from the line of (Angela McKinney) with Sharp Healthcare. Your line is open.

(Angela McKinney): Hi. My question is if we send the HIC Number with our 270, will the MBI be returned on the 271?

Tricia Rodgers: Hi, thank you so much for your question. We will not return the MBI through the 270/ 271 Eligibility Response. We will tell you on the message, the 271 response when we mail the card to a patient so that providers can expect – can expect to know when the patient should receive that card and then as we talked about earlier, we will return the MBI when a provider submits the claim Tricia Rodgers When you submit with a valid and active HICN. Thank you.

(Angela McKinney): Thank you.

Operator: And again, if you would like to ask a question, please press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. And your next question comes from the line of (Amy Leonard) with (Mikasa Corporation). Your line is open. (Amy Leonard), your line is open.

(Amy Leonard): Oh, yes. This is just a follow-up question on the 271 Response with regards to returning the messages to when the card was mailed, I'm not quite familiar – as quite as familiar with that transactions are you actually going to indicate the actual date that it was mailed or just that the MBI had been – has been mailed to the beneficiary?

Tricia Rodgers: We'll let you know that the MBI has been mailed to the beneficiary. By the time that we put that message in the response, there should have been sufficient time for the card to have been mailed and received by the beneficiary if the beneficiary's address and everything like that is correct. We're adding sufficient time for mailing before we put that information into the response, but there may be some, mail hiccups or if the beneficiary's address is not correct, then they may not have the card and that would be something that as a – as the providers get the 271 messages back you can check to see if the beneficiary address is matched and if the beneficiary needs to go to the Social Security Administration and change their official address for the Medicare records.

(Amy Leonard): Thank you.

Operator: And there are no further questions at this time.

Monica Kay: Again, I wanted to thank everyone for participating in this discussion today. As we get your comments and your questions, we capture all of this, so we can better inform you for our next open-door forum. Please, if you have any additional questions or comments, one that Social Security Number Removal Initiative please send them to our team mailbox at [ssnremoval@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:ssnremoval@cms.hhs.gov).

Again, we would ask that you participate in our open-door forums when possible. Obtain technical information on SSNRI from your regular communication channel as well as check our SSNRI website for updated information and again that address is <http://go.cms.gov/ssnri>. Thank you again.

Jill Darling: Thanks, Monica and just want everybody know on the agenda it has May 10th for the next SSNRI Open Door Forum but that date is subject to change. So, thanks everyone. Have a great day.

Operator: Thank you for participating in today's Social Security Number Removal Initiative Open-Door Forum. This call will be available for replay beginning today, March 28th at 5:00 p.m. through April 3rd at midnight. The conference

ID number for the replay is 49231735. The number to dial for the replay is 855-859-2056. This concludes today's conference call and you may now disconnect.

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