



January 8, 2008

Dear Valued User:

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) mandated that the Secretary of Health and Human Services adopt a standard, unique identifier for health care providers. This new identifier, the National Provider Identifier (NPI), will replace many existing national (e.g. UPIN), state (e.g. Medicaid), and proprietary (e.g. hospital, healthcare system, commercial payer) provider identifiers.

The following is a noteworthy excerpt from Availity's NPI Contingency Plan:

"The regulatory deadline for compliance by all covered entities is STILL May 23, 2007, except for small plans, which must be in compliance by May 23, 2008. CMS did NOT extend the NPI compliance date for another year and did not set a new mandate date with the next 12 months for compliance. Health Plans may enforce "NPI only" any time during the next 12 month period. CMS strongly urges providers to communicate with the health plans they bill and pay attention to information from health plans so that they are aware of each specific health plan's NPI contingency plan and enforcement dates."

For all X12 HIPAA standard electronic transactions, Availity will continue to accept and process these identifiers until May 16, 2008:

- Legacy provider numbers only
- NPI and legacy provider numbers
- NPI only

Although our objective is to support uninterrupted services with our trading partners until they achieve full NPI compliance, Availity must also comply with the NPI mandate. Therefore; effective May 17, 2008, Availity's NPI mandate enforcement contingency period will end.

All health care providers must use their assigned NPI as the primary identifier on all HIPAA standard transactions. When the NPI is used as the primary identifier, the only identifier that can be reported as the secondary identifier is the Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), and then only when required by the Implementation Guide for tax purposes. Also, where allowed, certain certification or license identifiers may be reported as a secondary identifier, for example a State License Number or DEA identification number.

On the payer's behalf, Availity will verify that the NPI is check-digit valid and will reject the transaction if invalid. Legacy provider identifiers assigned by payers will no longer be accepted as primary or secondary identifiers.

Note for Atypical Providers: After May 17, 2008, Availity will continue to accept the existing primary identifier as the primary identifier for atypical providers. Atypical providers are non-health care providers who are not eligible to obtain an NPI, such as taxi and construction companies. Such providers will need to register their identifiers with Availity. Availity will maintain a database of registered identifiers and refer to it to determine if an NPI is required for the submitting provider.

For more information about Availity's NPI compliance plan, please contact an Availity Client Services Representative at 1.800.AVAILITY (282.4548). For additional information about the National Provider Identifier, please access any of the following resources: [CMS NPI Communications](#), [NPPES](#), and the [CMS FAQs](#). Availity looks forward to assisting your organization in this transition and will continue to provide timely updates detailing the status of the NPI implementation.

Best regards,
Availity Client Services