

Dermatology Coding Alert

Prepare for UB-04 and Keep Payments Flowing

Start to test the new form now to ensure you're ready by May

If you're a biller who submits claims for hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, hospices, and other institutional claim filers, take note: In May, CMS will require you to ditch the UB-92 forms you're used to and begin using the UB-04.

Get up to speed now on the new process to avoid denials and headaches.

Test the Waters Before May

Starting May 23, you'll have to use the new UB-04 form to accommodate the new National Provider Identifier (NPI) numbers. But if you don't start testing the form earlier, you could be jeopardizing your claims.

You aren't required to start using the UB-04 until May 23, but you can start submitting claims with it as early as March 1, 2007, says **Felice Landry**, senior billing consultant with **Reingruber & Company** in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Try to start testing the new form as early as possible so you can keep an eye out for any unusual errors, Landry says. "Just like when you replace software at home, you need to pay attention to those little bugs," she says.

Warning: Your new 10-digit NPI must match your current provider number. If you don't test the form to check this before May 23, all of your claims could be rejected, Landry says. "And that means no money!"

Because of the number and types of changes that the new UB-04 includes, your billing software programs will need updating to correctly print your claims.

Best bet: Contact your software vendor as soon as possible to make sure that they are ready to comply with the deadlines if you are transmitting your claims electronically, Landry says.

Good news: If you're using the fiscal intermediary's free software, it will be compliant with the deadlines, Landry says.

Follow This Plan to Prepare Yourself

To prepare for the transition, **Darlene Greenhill**, healthcare consultant with Mauldin & Jenkins in Atlanta, suggests that you:

- Review Transmittal 1104 to see the new instructions and format (www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R1104CP.pdf)
- Be aware of the transition dates
- Make sure you have your NPI number
- Compare a hard copy of the UB-92 with the UB-04 to see the differences.

Important: The new UB-04 form was available to use starting March 1. However, you won't be required to use the new form until May 23, 2007. During the transition period, carriers will accept both current and revised forms, meaning that you can use either the UB-04 or the UB-92, according to CMS.