

Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

Reader Questions: Simplify by Using Separate NPP Forms

Question: When a mother brings her four children to our optometry practice for the first time, does she need to sign four separate NPP (notice of privacy practice) acknowledgement forms or can she simply sign one form for all four kids?

Idaho Subscriber

Answer: The mother must acknowledge receipt on behalf of each of the kids because she is the personal representative of the children. That means she could sign four different written acknowledgements, or you could have one acknowledgement where she acknowledges it for all four kids. Either format would meet HIPAA's legal requirements.

Which format you choose should depend on what's administratively easiest for your practice. Because most practices likely keep their records organized by the name of each child, having her sign four separate forms might make the most sense. That may take an extra 30 seconds now, but it will save a lot of time later if your staff needs to track down or retrieve the acknowledgement form for one specific child.

-- Answers to You Be the Expert, Reader Questions and Building a Better Business reviewed by **David Gibson, OD, FAAO**, practicing optometrist in Lubbock, Texas.