

## Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

### READER QUESTIONS: Watch for Searchable NPI Database

**Question:** There's so much information out there about using NPIs, but I haven't been able to find anything on how I can find other providers- NPIs. Is there going to be an easy way?

North Dakota Subscriber

**Answer:** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has finally answered this very question, which has been on providers- and coders- minds since the start of the National Provider Identifier (NPI) discussions. On May 30, in the Federal Register, CMS published a notice explaining that there will be a searchable database that you can use to look up NPIs.

**Good news:** According to the CMS, you can download a file from the Web by the end of June that contains the NPI information. You won't have to file a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to do it. You'll also have access to a - query-only- database, where you can search NPI numbers according to the provider name or the actual NPI number itself.

**Bonuses:** CMS is planning to provide monthly updates to the information in the database. Plus, you won't have to pay a fee to search or use the database.

You can view the entire notice at the CMS Web site

[www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProviderIdentifierStand/Downloads/DataDisseminationNPI.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProviderIdentifierStand/Downloads/DataDisseminationNPI.pdf).