

## Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

### In other news

Medicare maintains so many acronyms that it can be a full-time job to keep track of them. CMS aims to dispel confusion between at least two of their common abbreviations with new MLN Matters article SE1216, which breaks down the difference between National Provider Identifiers (NPIs) and Provider Transaction Access Numbers (PTANs). Some practices have used these numbers interchangeably, or confused them, which prompted CMS to issue the clarification.

According to the article, issued last week, your NPI is the ten-digit number that you enter on your claims to identify your practice as an entity eligible to bill Medicare for services performed.

The PTAN, however, is a number that authenticates you when you contact Medicare contractors. Both numbers are important, but cannot be used interchangeably. Think of the NPI as similar to your bank account number (identifying your specific account), and the PTAN being similar to the PIN number you use to access your money (which identifies that you are who you say you are).

To read the complete article, visit

[www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNMattersArticles/Downloads/SE1216.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNMattersArticles/Downloads/SE1216.pdf).