Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

January Is Drop-Dead NPI Deadline, CMS Says

You can count on one more requirement to make the new year even crazier than usual.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) has set a deadline for Medicare providers to begin using National Provider Identifiers (NPIs). -Effective January 1, 2008, your Medicare fee-for-service claims received must include an NPI in the primary fields on the claim (i.e., the billing and pay-to fields),- CMS says in a message to providers.

You can submit NPI/legacy pairs in those fields or submit only your NPI, CMS explains. If you submit claims with only a legacy provider number in the primary fields, the carrier will return them as unprocessable, CMS says.

Providers can continue to include legacy numbers only for the secondary fields, such as referring physicians, CMS adds.

Tip: If your claims with legacy pairs are processing fine, now's a good time to try submitting a test batch of NPI-only claims, CMS suggests. -This test will serve to assure your claims will successfully process when only the NPI is mandated on all claims.-