

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Physician Notes: Start Using Patients' MBIs Before the Transition Ends

Tip: Use MBIs on referrals, too.

If you're not using your patients' Medicare Beneficiary Identifiers (MBIs), you need to get on board ASAP.

In a policy change that commenced in April 2018, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) moved from the easily usurped Social Security number-laden, Health Insurance Claim Numbers (HICNs) to the randomly selected, 11-character MBIs, protecting beneficiaries and preventing identity theft.

"Safeguarding our beneficiaries' personal information continues to be one of our top priorities," said **Seema Verma**, CMS administrator in a release. "These new cards will not only be easier for beneficiaries but also provide the Medicare program with essential protections due to the new unique identifier on the cards."

That transition from HICNs to MBIs on Medicare cards ends on Dec. 31, 2019, with a few exceptions.

Reminder: Providers must have updated systems that accept the new MBIs. Plus, practices need to ensure they're using MBIs for referrals, and that their vendors and business partners are also utilizing MBIs, too.

See the most updated CMS guidance on MBIs and the exceptions to the rule at www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE18006.pdf.