

Eli's Hospice Insider

Billing: Make Sure You're Ready For New Medicare Cards

Heed this advice on how to handle the MBI.

If you use a common trick to get your patients' correct HICN for billing, that option is going away.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** "is aware that some providers currently use a combination of the SSN and various suffixes until they find a HICN that matches their patient," CMS says in an email about the new Medicare cards that started going out to beneficiaries this month.

"The CMS will not allow for the return of an MBI in eligibility transactions if the SSN or the HICN is provided because there is a high risk of medical identity theft," CMS says. "Providers should ensure they have a registration/admission process in place that requests the Medicare identification card from their patients."

Reminder: The new cards will no longer contain Social Security Numbers, and instead will have the new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier number.

Do you need a quick way to determine whether your patient's Medicare number is the old HICN or the new MBI? HHH Medicare Administrative Contractor **National Government Services** has a few tips.

Tip #1: An HICN uses a Social Security Number with a variety of prefixes or suffixes, while an MBI has a random assemblage of letters and numbers, NGS explains in an email to providers. An example of an HICN is 012345678A, while an example of an MBI is 1EG4-TE5-MK73.

Tip #2: An MBI will not use the letters S, L, O, I, B, and Z.

See more info on the MBI format at www.cms.gov/Medicare/New-Medicare-Card/Understanding-the-MBI-with-Format.pdf.

Remember: "The HICN will no longer be accepted on claims received on and after 1/1/2020," NGS says in an MBI timeline.