

MDS Alert

MDS & BILLING NEWS TO USE: Prepare for the new UB-04 form.

By May 23, all institutional paper claims must use the new UB-04 form to accommodate the new National Provider Identifier (NPI) numbers. Because of the number and types of changes that the new UB-04 includes, your billing software programs will need updating.

Best bet: Contact your software vendor as soon as possible to make sure that they are ready to comply with the deadlines if you are transmitting your claims electronically, says **Felice Landry**, senior billing consultant with **Reingruber & Company** in St. Petersburg, FL.

Find out what the vendor intends to do to address the changes and when you can expect upgrades to occur. Get the timeline from your vendor in writing to ensure that they deliver when they say they will.

If you're using the fiscal intermediary's free software, it will be compliant with the deadlines, Landry says.

You aren't required to start using the UB-04 until May 23, but you can start submitting claims with it as early as March 1, 2007.

Try to start testing the new form as early as possible so you can keep an eye out for any unusual errors, Landry urges.

"Just like when you replace software at home, you need to pay attention to those little bugs," she says.

To prepare for the transition to the UB-04, **Darlene Greenhill**, healthcare consultant with **Mauldin & Jenkins**, in Atlanta, GA suggests that nursing facilities:

- Review Transmittal 1104 to see the new instructions and format. You can download the transmittal at www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R1104CP.pdf;
- Be aware of the transition dates;
- Make sure you have your NPI number; and
- Compare a hard copy of the UB-92 with the UB-04 to see the differences.