

## MDS Alert

### Reader Question: Out with HICNs, In with MBIs

**Question:** We have a few Medicare residents and I am a little confused by the switch to the Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) numbers from the old Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN). Do I have to make the switch as soon as a particular resident has an MBI?

Delaware Subscriber

**Answer:** Yes, start using the MBI number as soon as you're aware that an individual resident has received one - and at this point in 2019, all Medicare beneficiaries should have received their new numbers.

"The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) requires CMS to remove Social Security Numbers from all Medicare cards by April 2019. A new, randomly generated Medicare Beneficiary Identifier, or MBI, is replacing the SSN-based HICN. The new MBI is noticeably different than the HICN. Just like with the HICN, the MBI hyphens on the card are for illustration purposes: Don't include the hyphens or spaces on transactions. The MBI uses numbers 0-9 and all uppercase letters except for S, L, O, I, B, and Z," according to a bulletin released by the **Medicare Learning Network** (MLN) on March 6, 2019.

You can enter the MBI the same way you would enter the HICN, which is item A0600 on the MDS.

"Don't use hyphens or spaces with the MBI to avoid rejection of your claim. The MBI will replace the HICN on Medicare transactions including Billing, Eligibility Status, and Claim Status. The effective date of the MBI, like the old HICN, is the date each beneficiary was or is eligible for Medicare. Until December 31, 2019, you can use either the HICN or the MBI in the same field where you've always put the HICN," MLN says.