

Health Information Compliance Alert

Industry Notes: The MBI Transition Is Coming to a Close

If you're a Medicare provider, you need to update your systems and start using your patients' Medicare Beneficiary Identifiers (MBIs) on claims 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' systems must be ready to accept the new MBIs before the transition ends, advises CMS. 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.