

Health Information Compliance Alert

National Provider Identifier Update: Keep Your Legacy Numbers To Avoid Pay Glitches

Don't remove all of your legacy numbers from the National Provider Identifier (NPI) database. If you do, Medicare and other payors may have a hard time finding you and that could delay your payments.

When the NPI database comes out on Sept. 4, payors will be looking up their providers according to those legacy numbers, officials from the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** told an Aug. 14 physician Open Door Forum.

"If you remove your legacy numbers from the 'Other Provider Identifier/Other Provider Identifier Type Code' fields, linkages that Medicare has established using the reported Medicare legacy numbers will be broken and your Medicare claims could be rejected," CMS warns in a message to providers.

The old problem: Providers had until Aug. 20 to remove sensitive data like Social Security Numbers from the NPI database. Some providers wrote their SSNs in the NPI database in the "other provider numbers" field. You're supposed to use this field to list your legacy numbers.

The new problem: CMS then advised providers to remove SSNs from those fields to avoid their public release in the NPI database. But then providers just erased all numbers from that field. "The reporting of legacy numbers in the 'Other Provider Identifier/Other Provider Identifier Type Code' fields in the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPDES) will assist Medicare in successfully creating linkages between providers' NPIs and the identifiers that Medicare has assigned to them," CMS says in the release.