

Monday Special: Interview with NPIIdentify's Marti Jensen

Note: Here is an updated (October 2010) list where you can find NPIs.

<https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES/NPIRegistryHome.do>

<http://nynpi.com/>

<http://www.npinumberlookup.org/>

<http://www.npinumberlookup.org>

<http://www.npivalidator.com/>

<http://npidb.org/>

<http://www.hmedata.com/mpi.asp>

Also, click [here](#) for more answers about NPIs.

UPDATE on July 4, 2009: I've been having problems with the links in this article and I've found that the HITTG website has vanished! I've not been able to find out where it went. If anyone has any information, please let me know.

Until recently you could download one directory during every update cycle completely free of charge.

I wish we could keep doing that, but here's what happened:

- *Literally hundreds of downloads were being taken "against the rules," that is, people were creating multiple accounts and downloading multiple states every month. That cost us serious bandwidth problems, and slowed down our site for everyone. Eventually, it crashed our site, broke some stuff, and threw us offline for quite awhile.*
- *We put about 45 hours of work each month into processing the data, turning it into software, and uploading it so you can access it.*

Unfortunately, so few people were buying our non-free products that we were frankly losing money.

Those two things, taken together, meant that if we were going to keep doing NPIIdentify Desktop – the best NPI directory on the planet – we would have to start charging a little bit for it, both to prevent the download avalanche, and to hopefully at least break even.

We're truly sorry! But the good news is that we've reduced the price, so for those of you that have been paying for multiple states, now you'll be paying far less! For those who were, well, shall we say "fibbing," you'll be paying a little bit more. It's still the best NPI directory out there, and it's still the least expensive, with all of the others running at least \$39 per state!

Here's my original article:

I had the pleasure of interviewing Marti Jensen of HITTG Consulting recently. Marti was kind enough to answer lots of questions about himself, the company, and their new product **NPIIdentify**.

As most of you know, the transition to requiring NPIs on claims last year was one of the more chaotic and troublesome times for medical practices in recent memory. To lay the foundation for understanding the **NPI (National Provider Identifier)**, and what NPIIdentify does, here's what the 2006 **CMS NPI Fact Sheet** states:

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 requires the adoption of a standard unique identifier for health care providers. The NPI Final Rule issued January 23, 2004 adopted the NPI as this standard.

Describing the NPI, the fact sheet goes on to say:

The NPI is a 10-digit, intelligence free numeric identifier (10 digit number). Intelligence free means that the numbers

do not carry information about health care providers, such as the state in which they practice or their provider type or specialization. The provider's NPI will not change and will remain with the provider regardless of job or location changes.

Marti Jensen is HITTG's Chief Operating Officer and has an impressive list of accomplishments. Marti describes himself as a "student of the Internet," and his group as one that takes resources and makes them more accessible to users. In the case of NPIIdentify, users are typically physician offices, billers and billing companies, software vendors and healthplans. Creating this product, Marti explained that CMS provides the NPI information for free, so HITTG's job was to fashion the information into a database that is easy to search. This is especially helpful as the entire CMS file cannot be imported into Excel due to its size.

NPIIdentify not only provides NPIs, it also provides **UPINs** and:

- Provider name, including AKA
- Type of provider (organization, male, female)
- Practice location address
- Mailing address
- Zip code, 3, 5 or 9 digits
- State License Code and licensing state
- Taxonomy Code (the 9-digit numbers assigned under the HIPAA provisions to health care providers, to digitally encode their specialty in order to facilitate electronic billing) and specialty/subspecialty description
- Other Identifiers, including:
 - Medicare NSC (National Supplier Clearinghouse for DME)
 - Medicare PIN
 - Other Medicare IDs
 - Medicaid Number
- Date provider updated the information

Marti's group HITTG (Healthcare IT Transition Group, Inc.) describes itself like this:

HITTG was originally formed in 1993 as Computer Quality Associates, Inc., and, from its first day, worked almost

exclusively in healthcare information technology. Ten years later, its HIPAA Transition Weblog became a respected independent voice amidst the difficulties of implementing the HIPAA standards. HITTG now publishes the HIT Transition Weblog and HITSync eMagazine, devotes substantial resources to healthcare IT standards development on the national level, and serves clients in varied capacities within healthcare IT.

I have to tell you that one of the things I really like about HITTG is their mission, which says the group “...works with organizations to reduce the cost and improve the quality of healthcare through the development and implementation of robust IT standards.”

I do not, however, care for their acronym. I just can't remember it! I'm sure they'd rather we all just remember NPIdentify and find them from there, but I'd rather they do something interesting by calling themselves something like Shaboom!, HealthLookup or NeedGovNum.

Now that I've criticized their name, where could they take their gig from here?

1. All practice management and billing software should integrate HITTG products as standard issue.
2. One of the most hit and miss mailing lists ever are those for doctors – how about a “Where are they now?” ability to get a fast mailing list customizable by specialty, location, etc. I don't know of a list that keeps up with docs moving locations and practices. (I do believe Marti told me they could produce mailing lists for specific needs for a reasonable price, but you'll have to speak with him about that.)
3. How about a list from the insurance department by state of all plans operating in a state and any other gritty information we could get about them?