

NPI Number (National Provider Identifier)

The NPI is a 10-position, intelligence-free numeric identifier (10-digit number). This means that the numbers do not carry other information about healthcare providers, such as the state in which they live or their medical specialty.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 requires issuance of a unique national provider identifier (NPI) to each physician, supplier, and other provider of health care (45 CFR Part 162, Subpart D (162.402-162.414)).

To comply with this requirement, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) began to accept applications for, and to issue NPIs, on May 23, 2005.

Beginning May 23, 2007 (May 23, 2008, for small health plans), the NPI must be used in lieu of legacy provider identifiers. Legacy provider identifiers include:

- Online Survey Certification and Reporting (OSCAR) system numbers;
- National Supplier Clearinghouse (NSC) numbers;
- Provider Identification Numbers (PINs); and
- Unique Physician Identification Numbers (UPINs) used by Medicare.

They do not include taxpayer identifier numbers (TINs) such as:

- Employer Identification Numbers (EINs); or
- Social Security Numbers (SSNs).