

# When, If Ever, Do You Get a New NPI Number and Other NPI Questions



Image by Oberazzi via Flickr

## What is a NPI again?

The National Provider Identifier (NPI) is a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Administrative Simplification Standard. The NPI is a unique identification number for covered health care providers. Covered health care providers and all health plans and health care clearinghouses must use the NPIs in the administrative and financial transactions adopted under HIPAA. 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 NPI must be used in lieu of legacy provider identifiers in the HIPAA standards transactions.

As outlined in the Federal Regulation, The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), covered providers must also share their NPI with other providers, health plans, clearinghouses, and any entity that may need it for billing purposes.

## **When should you get a new NPI?**

The National Provider Identifier (NPI) is meant to be a lasting identifier, and is expected to remain unchanged even if a health care provider changes his or her name, address, provider taxonomy, or other information that was furnished as part of the original NPI application process. There are some situations, however, in which an NPI may change such as when health care provider organizations determine they may need a new NPI due to, for example, certain **changes of ownership**, the **conditions of a purchase**, or a **new owner's subpart strategies**. There also may be situations where a new NPI is necessary because the current NPI was used for fraudulent purposes.

A health care provider (or the trustee/legal representative of a health care provider) should deactivate its NPI in certain situations, such as **retirement** or **death** of an individual, **disbandment of an organization**, or fraudulent use of the NPI. To deactivate an NPI, a health care provider (or the trustee/legal representative of a health care provider) must complete a CMS-10114 and mail it to the NPI Enumerator.

## **Does the NPI replace the tax ID number?**

The **billing provider's** tax ID number and NPI are always required on claims. Any other providers identified on the claim, such as rendering provider or service facility, must be identified with their **NPI only**. Their tax ID number should not be included.

For eligibility, claim status inquiry, referral and precertification, only the NPI (no tax ID number) is used.

## **How does a rendering physician report their National Provider Identifier (NPI)**

**on a claim that includes Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) or Electronic Prescribing Incentive Program (eRx) quality-data codes (QDCs)? What if he/she is part of a group and the group NPI is used on the claim?**

Your individual National Provider Identifier (NPI) must be included on the claim line items for the quality-data codes (QDCs) you submit as well as the line items for the services to which the QDC is applicable. The PQRI/eRx QDC must be included on the same claim that is submitted for payment at the time the claim is initially submitted in order to be included in PQRI analysis.

If a group NPI is used at the claim level, the individual rendering physician's NPI must be placed on each line item, including all allowed-charge and quality-data line items. See the PQRI Implementation Guide for a sample CMS-1500 claim. This is available as a download from the Measures/Codes section of the CMS PQRI website. For eRx, see the Claims-Based Reporting Principles for eRx, available on the CMS eRx website.

**If a health care provider with a National Provider Identifier (NPI) moves to a new location, must the health care provider notify the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) of its new address?**

Yes. A covered health care provider must notify the NPPES of the address change within 30 days of the effective date of the change. We encourage health care providers who have been

assigned NPIs, but who are not covered entities, to do the same. A health care provider may submit the change to NPES via the web or by paper. If paper is preferred, the health care provider may download the NPI Application/Update Form (CMS-10114) from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' forms page or may call the NPI Enumerator (1-800-465-3203) and request a form.

## **What happens when you join a group?**

In Section 4B of the CMS-855I, the NPI of the Group should be entered if it has been issued to the Group. If you are joining a group, the group is responsible for providing you with their current Provider Identification Number (PIN) and the NPI, if they have been issued.

## **If you are a solo physician with an incorporated practice, how many NPIs should you have?**

An individual is eligible for only one NPI. In the above example, there are two health care providers: the physician and the corporation. The physician would obtain an NPI (Entity Type Code 1, Individual). The corporation would obtain an NPI (Entity Type Code 2, Organization). Generally, the corporation's NPI would represent the Billing and Pay-to Providers and the physician's NPI would represent the Rendering, Referring/Ordering, Attending, Operating and/or Other Providers. These physicians should ensure that their enrollment records with the health plans to whom they will be sending claims are up to date, that those health plans are aware of the assigned NPIs, and that the NPIs are used in a way that is compatible with their enrollment.

**I do not submit healthcare claims to**

## **Medicare; do I need a National Provider Identifier (NPI)?**

Yes. NPIs are required by the NPI Final Rule to be used to identify health care providers in HIPAA standard transactions (including claims) that are conducted with any health plan, not just with Medicare. So even if you do not submit claims to Medicare, but submit HIPAA standard claims transactions to some other health plan, you are required to use an NPI in those transactions, and should be doing so as of May 23, 2007. Additionally, many health plans are requiring that providers use NPIs on paper claims. Providers should check with any health plan with whom they conduct business to determine their policy on the use of the NPI for paper claims.

\*Questions and Answers excerpted from the CMS website.

## **Where can you look up 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/npi.asp>

