

April 2019

New Medicare Beneficiary Identifier – Are You Ready?

In February 2018, we posted a Timely Topic on an important upcoming change: [New Medicare Cards Transition Begins April 1, 2018 – Will You Be Ready?](#) If the question in February 2018 was “*Will You Be Ready?*”, the question now is, “*Are You Ready – And If Not, Why Not?*”

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) included a requirement that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) discontinue use of social security numbers to identify Medicare beneficiaries and instead switch to a randomly-generated Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI).

Starting in April 2018, claims could include either the new MBI or the social security number -based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN). Starting in April 2018, beneficiaries newly enrolled into Medicare were assigned the MBI so claims for services for those beneficiaries could only be submitted with their MBI. After December 31, 2019, with a limited number of exceptions, only the MBI will be accepted on for claims and other transactions.

It's hard to believe that we are already in the second quarter of 2019. The rest of the year will fly by just as quickly and before we know it, it will be the end of the year and use MBI will be required.

CMS recently reported that as of March 22, 2019, 69% of claims for professional services included the beneficiary's MBI. If your claims are among the 31% not using the MBI, the time to address this is now!

Steps to take include:

- Confirm that your billing office, systems and software can accept and use the MBI.
- Update patient records to include the MBI. You can obtain the MBI from the patient, from a look-up tool on your Medicare Administrative Contractor's (MAC) website or from the Remittance Advices you receive from your MAC.

CMS's Medicare Learning Network article [SE 18006: New Medicare Beneficiary Identifier \(MBI\) Get It, Use It](#), contains practical information with links to sources that will help you make this transition. Your MAC may offer additional resources. For example, Noridian has scheduled a webinar for June 13, 2019, *Using the Medicare Beneficiary Identifier*. Information and registration available [here](#).

If you are not using the MBI, act now to avoid rejected claims after December 31!