

THE NPI TIMES

Keeping you up-to-date on National Provider Identifier (NPI) issues at BCBSOK.

You must have your National Provider Identifier (NPI) by the May 23, 2007 compliance date! Do you have your NPI?

What to do after you receive your NPI - Review the list below:

1. Notify BCBSOK as soon as you receive your NPI confirmation, by completing the NPI Submission Form you received from us.
2. Mail or fax your completed form and a copy of the NPI Enumerator's letter or confirmation e-mail as soon as possible to the following location:

**Health Industry Relations
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of
Oklahoma
P.O. Box 3283
Tulsa, OK 74102-9969
Fax #: 866-900-2634**

You also may submit your NPI number online at www.bcbsok.com. Simply go to the Health Care Providers section, click on the NPI logo, and select the link entitled Submit Your NPI to Us Here. Remember: you must still fax or e-mail us a copy of the confirmation letter sent to you by the NPI Enumerator for verification purposes. E-mails can be sent to hir@bcbsok.com with the NPI number in the subject field or fax the NPI enumerator e-mail or other documentation to 918-592-9496.

3. Distribute your NPIs to all other entities that you transact business with electronically to minimize any disruption in reimbursement flow.
4. Make programming changes and work with your vendors to utilize the NPIs and add any information that will be required on electronic transactions.
5. Run a test with your vendors to ensure everything is working correctly and there is no interruption to your cash flow.
6. Maintain the original confirmation letter from the NPI Enumerator in your files.

Impact of NPI

Your NPI will be the single identifier that distinguishes you from millions of providers in a consistent and permanent way – an important step in facilitating faster claim payments. It is important that you work with BCBSOK to understand all of the business processing implications that NPI may have on your practice. For example:

- Determine, if you are an organization, how many NPIs you will need, based on how you bill now and how you want to bill in the future.
- Know the provider numbers currently

assigned to you by your payers. Once you obtain your NPI, each payer, billing service vendor and clearinghouse you use for electronic transactions will need to know your NPI.

- Align old payer-specific provider numbers with new NPI for proper billing and payment processing.
- Validate the change from your current provider numbers to your new NPI is properly completed prior to the compliance date of May 23, 2007.

NPI has its advantages

Once you receive your NPI, it is yours for life. It will not change and will remain with you even if you move, change specialties, practice affiliations or locations. In addition, record keeping will be more simple, since your NPI will be accepted by all payers, and they cannot require you to obtain additional NPIs. Having a NPI will allow you to continue to conduct HIPAA standard electronic transactions after May 23, 2007.

Have a Question?

If you have any questions on NPI and on the application process, contact:

- NPI Enumerator Call Center at 1-800-465-3203, or
- Send an email to: customerservice@npienumerator.com

If you have any questions on how BCBSOK is implementing NPI, contact:

- BCBSOK Health Industry Relations representative at 1-800-722-3730
- Send an e-mail to: npi@bcbsok.com



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Oklahoma**



Resources

Additional information regarding NPI can be found on the following Web sites:

- In this issue of The NPI TIMES find out:*
- **The impact of NPI on your practice**
 - **The advantages of using NPI**
 - **How to obtain your NPI**
 - **What to do once you receive it**

- CMS: www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProviderStand/.
- National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES): www.nppes.cms.hhs.gov.
- BCBSOK Web site at: www.bcbsok.com. Go to the Health Care Providers section and click on the NPI logo for Frequently Asked Questions, an NPI Glossary and more!

BCBSOK is proud to present the first issue of The NPI TIMES, a newsletter to keep you up-to-date with the latest information on our NPI implementation.

Effective May 23, 2007, the National Provider Identifier (NPI), mandated by federal HIPAA regulations, becomes the single provider identifier that must be used by health plans for all standard electronic claim transactions. Your NPI will replace the different provider identifiers you currently use for each health plan. We encourage you to apply for your NPI as soon as possible, as you will not be able to use your old provider numbers after that date.



Critical Dates and Milestones to Remember

Collection Phase – July 2006 BCBSOK started initial data collection, requesting that all providers submit their NPIs to us.

Transition Phase - Ongoing BCBSOK will accept NPI numbers along with your existing BCBSOK ID on standard electronic claim transactions.

CAUTION!

If you don't obtain an NPI, your payments may be affected. You will not be able to use standard HIPAA electronic transactions with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) or other health plans. In addition, per federal regulations, penalties may be assessed for non-compliance. We recommend you apply for your NPI well in advance of the deadline to ensure you avoid any penalty.

How to Obtain your NPI(s) from the NPI Enumerator

Submit an application for your NPI online at: www.nppes.cms.hhs.gov, or contact the NPI Enumerator at 1-800-465-3203 to request a paper application, and send it to:

**NPI Enumerator
P.O. Box 6059
Fargo, ND 58108-6059**