

WHAT DENTISTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NATIONAL PROVIDER IDENTIFIER (NPI)

What is the National Provider Identifier (NPI)?

- The NPI is a unique identifier for each health care provider to use for electronic transactions, including claim submissions.
- It is intended to eliminate the need to use different identifiers when sending electronic transactions to different payers.
- The NPI will replace all your previous identifiers used for electronic transactions. I.e. unique identification numbers assigned by insurance companies, Medicare and Medicaid identification numbers, CHAMPUS and UPIN identifiers.
- NPI numbers are 10-digit numbers assigned by the federal government through the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) that are unique to each covered health care provider and health care organization.
- NPI's are permanent and do not expire or change if you move.

Are you required to obtain and use an NPI?

All health care providers are **eligible** for an NPI number, only if you answer "yes" to any one of the following questions, you are **required** by federal law to obtain an NPI:

- Have you submitted claims electronically?
- Have you submitted claims attachments electronically?
- Have you used the Internet to verify eligibility or check on the status of a claim?

But even dentists who do not use HIPAA standard electronic transactions may encounter health plans that require an NPI on paper claims, according to the ADA Department of Dental Informatics. Some have already expressed this intention at NPI-related public hearings. Additionally, state laws could require dentists who are not HIPAA-covered entities (do not file electronic transactions) to obtain NPIs. Minnesota has already enacted such a law. For such reasons, the ADA encourages all dentists to apply for an NPI.

How do you apply for and receive an NPI?

- Apply Online: <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov>
- Apply on paper by mail by printing out the below PDF form and mailing it to: NPI Enumerator P.O. Box 6059 Fargo, ND 58108-6059

[Click here](#) to download the **NPI Application**

What should you do with your NPI once you receive it?

- Not all dental plans, or other payers are ready to start using NPIs. They must be ready by May 23, 2007.
- Each payer should notify you when they are ready to begin accepting NPIs in place of other identifiers on transactions.
- Some payers will have a period of time when you will submit both your current identifier and your NPI on each transaction at the same time so that processing systems can be tested.
- Do not submit your NPI on electronic transactions or on paper claims until the payer has told you that they are ready to accept it.

December 2006 - All HIPAA covered healthcare providers must obtain an NPI, report their NPI and taxonomies to EDS, and begin submitting their NPI and taxonomies no later than May 23, 2007 on all claims, both electronic and paper, and on all other electronic transactions.

