

Developments of Interest Within the Healthcare Industry

Over the past few months, there have been a number of developments of interest within the healthcare industry. We would like to take the opportunity to make you aware of these developments and their potential impact on your professional practice.

CMS URGES PHYSICIANS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS TO APPLY EARLY FOR NATIONAL PROVIDER IDENTIFIER (NPI)

In a May 25th press release, CMS urged all health care providers to apply for National Provider Identifiers (NPI) far in advance of the deadline of May 22, 2007. The NP1, a 10-digit numeric identifier that does not expire or change, must be used in all standard health care transactions, as specified by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), no later than May 23, 2007. The NPI helps to ensure that medical claims are processed on time and payments are made correctly. The Medicare fee-for-service program began accepting the NP1 from health care providers as of January 2006.

The NP1 can be obtained in one of three ways:

- 1. Apply online (<https://NPPES.cms.hhs.gov>);
- 2. Call the NPI Enumerator and request a paper NPI application form, complete it, and mail it back to the address on the form; or
- 3. Apply for a bulk enumeration, which allows an Electronic File Interchange Organization (EFIO) approved by CMS to obtain a number of providers' NPIs.

Additionally, the American Academy of Family Physicians has published "Frequently Asked Questions" regarding the NPI, available at: <http://www.aafp.org>