
National Provider Identifier (NPI)

Frequently Asked Questions

On May 6, 2005, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the availability of obtaining your NPI. (Please visit <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/hipaa/hipaa2/npi-provider.pdf> for a copy of this letter.) Since this announcement, ValueOptions has received several inquiries regarding the use and implementation of the NPI within our system.

Q: What is the NPI?

A: The National Provider Identifier (NPI) is a step to promote, improve, and simplify all electronic transactions. Presently, health plans assign an identifying number to each provider with whom they conduct electronic business. Since providers typically work with several health plans, they are likely to have a different identifier number for each plan. The NPI will ensure that each provider has one unique identifier to be used in transactions across all health plans.

Q: How will the NPI work?

A: The NPI is expected to carry no intelligence; in other words, its characters will not themselves provide information about the provider. Each health care provider will receive just one unique identifier, which will remain with the provider throughout his/her life as a provider. This unique identifier will be used throughout the health care industry to identify the provider in all HIPAA-related transactions.

Q: Is it applicable to all health care providers?

A: It is applicable to all health care providers including but not limited to individual practitioners, dentists, pharmacists and pharmacies, hospitals, nursing homes, and group practices.

Q: Am I required to use a NPI?

A: Yes. The NPI must be used by all qualified licensed providers. A requirement of HIPAA, this identifier is unique to each provider and will be the standard provider number that each provider will be required to use in all health care transactions beginning with claims received on May 23, 2007, regardless of the date of service.

Q: When will ValueOptions begin using NPIs?

A: ValueOptions will be compliant with this requirement by May 23, 2007. Most health plans, including Medicare, Medicaid, private health insurance issuers and clearinghouses will be required to accept and use a NPI in standard transactions by May 23, 2007. Small health plans have until May 23, 2008.

Q: Will I be informed when to start using my NPI with ValueOptions?

A: Yes. This information will be announced in *The Valued Provider* (our provider newsletter) and also posted on our website (www.valueoptions.com). Please be sure to pay special attention to these two communication tools as they are our primary way to reach you and/or your facility.

Q: Will ValueOptions still accept my ValueOptions' Provider Identification number?

A: After May 23, 2007, ValueOptions will require your NPI for claims and other transactions; however, ValueOptions will continue to accept your ValueOptions' specific Provider Identification number until May 23, 2007. You may continue to supply your legacy ValueOptions Provider Identification and Vendor numbers on claims, but must supply your NPI by the May 23, 2007 deadline. If you do not know your current Provider Identification or Vendor numbers, please contact our National Provider Line at 800-397-1630, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. (EST).

Q: Is the NPI only required for electronic claims submissions?

A: ValueOptions will require providers to provide NPI on all claims transactions after May 23, 2007. However, we also recommend that you include your NPI on other correspondence (e.g. emails, faxes, letters, etc.) submitted to ValueOptions.

Q: There are new claims forms, where can I get them and when will ValueOptions require their use?

A: With the implementation of the NPI, new claim forms will be updated to accommodate the reporting of this number. The major difference between the new and old forms is the ability to capture the provider's NPI and legacy number identifier. In accordance with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), all ValueOptions' providers will also be required to use the new CMS-1500 Form for April 2, 2007 and the UB-04 Form on May 23rd, 2007.

For information on the CMS-1500, please go to:

- <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R1058CP.pdf>
- <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMArticles/downloads/MM5060.pdf>

For information on the UB-92 (CMS-1450), please go to:

(Note: The new claim form will be called the UB-04 and will incorporate the NPI, taxonomy and additional codes.)

- <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R1104CP.pdf>
- <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMArticles/downloads/MM5072.pdf>

More information about the filing of clean claims can be found in ValueOptions' Provider Handbook, Claims Payment section at www.valueoptions.com/providers/Handbook/PDFs/Administration/Claims_Payment_2006.pdf.

Q: What is a Taxonomy Code?

A: The Health Care Provider Taxonomy code set is a collection of unique alphanumeric codes, ten characters in length. The code set is structured into three distinct “levels” including Provider Type, Classification, and Area of Specialization. The Health Care Provider Taxonomy code set allows a single provider (individual, group, or institution) to identify their specialty category. Providers may have one or more than one value associated to them.

Q: What will happen if I do not include a NPI and/or Taxonomy code on a claims form?

A: Files received without this information will be **rejected** and will not be allowed to upload to the claim payment system; the files will need to be resubmitted with this required information. This requirement is effective with claims received on and after May 23, 2007. This requirement is not based on dates of service, but date of the receipt of the claim.

Q: What happens if I fail to submit my NPI or accidentally enter the wrong NPI on a claim form?

A: If you do not submit an NPI or if you submit a claim without a valid NPI number on or after the May 23, 2007 compliance date, your claim may be denied and returned.

Q: When can I send my NPI information to ValueOptions?

A: We encourage you to submit your NPI information as soon as possible to ensure that our database is updated prior to the May 23, 2007 compliance date set by CMS. Along with your NPI number, you must include a copy of your NPI confirmation letter or e-mail. If you do not supply these items, we will **not** consider your record complete.

Q: How do I submit my NPI information to ValueOptions?

A: If you have not received a letter in the mail requesting your NPI information, please visit our website at www.valueoptions.com and select “Providers”. The letter and forms distributed in the mailing are posted to our website. Download the forms, complete and submit to the address below:

ValueOptions, Inc.
Attention: NPI
P.O. Box 4080
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

Q: What if I submitted my NPI to ValueOptions prior to the mailing?

A: Your NPI submission must also include a copy of your NPI confirmation letter or e-mail. We encourage you to access our website to obtain the necessary forms.

Q: How will I know if ValueOptions is in receipt of my NPI? Will I receive a confirmation?

A: ValueOptions will only contact providers who have not submitted completed information by the May 23, 2007 deadline.

Q: Can ValueOptions' information system handle this implementation?

A: Yes. ValueOptions has modified our information systems, administrative processes, reference files and forms in order to ensure continuity between old provider identifiers and the new NPIs.

Q: How do I apply for my NPI?

A: To address the volume of providers for which a NPI must be assigned, CMS encourages all providers to apply early. You can accomplish this in one of three ways:

1. Apply through a web-based application, visit: <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov>.
2. Prepare a paper application and send it to The Enumerator (NPI) on behalf of the Secretary, beginning July 1, 2005. The application and address is available at <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov>.
3. Contact CMS for a copy of the application or any questions at 800-465-3203 or TTY 800-692-2326.

Q: How do I find out more about the NPI?

A: You can find out more about the NPI by:

- Visiting the CMS website at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov> for general information
- Reviewing the CMS FAQ section at <http://questions.cms.hhs.gov/>
- Viewing the NPI Final Rule at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/14mar20010800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-1149.pdf>
- Reviewing fact sheets, tip sheets, FAQs, and MedLearn Matter Articles at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/04_education.asp