



## Social Security Number Removal Initiative

Along with delivery system and payment reform, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) also requires the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) to remove Social Security Numbers (SSNs) from all Medicare cards by April 2019. The SSN-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) on the traditional red, white, and blue Medicare card will be replaced by a new, randomly generated Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) on both the new ID cards and in CMS systems. The purpose of the transition is to help prevent fraud and fight identity theft, as well as protect Medicare beneficiaries' financial and private health information.

CMS will begin mailing new ID cards to approximately 60 million Medicare beneficiaries in April 2018. There is a planned 21 month transition period during which all healthcare providers will be able to use the old SSN based HICN or the new MBI for billing purposes. CMS is currently developing a secure point of service tool where doctors and other healthcare providers will be able to look up the new MBI.

In the meantime, there are some actions you can take to help your practice get ready for the first patients who present the new MBI based ID card to your office.

- Work with your billing vendor to make sure your practice management system will be updated to accept the new format. While there will be a transition period, systems should be able to accept the new MBI format by April 2018.
- Test your system changes and work with your staff to be sure your office is ready to use the new MBI format.
- Verify your Medicare patients' addresses. Make sure the address you have on file matches the Medicare address you get on electronic eligibility transactions. Instruct your patients to contact the Social Security Administration to correct any discrepancies.

For more information visit: <https://www.csm.gov/medicare/SSNRI/Providers/html>

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