Quadax Prepares for New Medicare Beneficiary Identifier

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) of 2015 mandates that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) remove Social Security Numbers (SSNs) from all Medicare cards by April 2019. Congress passed this legislation with the intent of better protecting Medicare beneficiaries from identity theft and to help safeguard against Medicare and Medicaid fraud.

Replacing all existing Medicare numbers with new Medicare Beneficiary Identifiers (MBIs) is an enormous undertaking, so CMS has created a comprehensive plan. First, they will use an MBI generator to create and randomly assign 150 million MBIs to 60 million active and 90 million archived beneficiaries. New Medicare beneficiaries will also receive an MBI. The new MBI format will contain uppercase alphabetic and numeric characters. It will be 11 digits in length and appear clearly different from the SSN-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN).

Once these new MBI numbers are assigned, CMS will mail out new Medicare cards. All beneficiaries will start receiving new cards in April 2018. Starting then, a transition period in which both numbers (MBI and HICN) are accepted will be in place until December 31, 2019. Beginning in October 2018, Medicare will return only the MBI on remittances, even if you submit the HICN on the claim. During this transition period, CMS will work alongside providers and payers to modify systems and business processes to accommodate the receipt, transmission, display, and processing of the MBI.

To prepare for this change, Quadax will be updating several elements of HARP, PAS, and Xpeditor by April 1, 2018. These updates will ensure that Quadax's suite of Revenue Cycle Management products can seamlessly make the switch to the new MBI system. Listed below are just some of the components of HARP, PAS, and Xpeditor that either will be updated or have already been updated:

HARP and PAS features to be updated:
- Demographics page
- Insurance page (MCAR screen type)
- Inquiry page
- Interfaces – DRS and CRS edits
- Electronic SII and XML claim formats
- Hardcopy claim template
- Electronic eligibility using MBI
- Electronic claim status using MBI
- Remittance Accu-Matching logic for MBI
- Reports displaying insurance contract number
- Any Medicare HICN logic
- Any client web services/APIs that exchange insurance data

Xpeditor features that have already been updated:
- 1500 and UB claim edits
  - Both the HICN and MBI formats will be allowed between 4/1/18 and 12/31/19.
  - Effective 1/1/20, only the MBI format will be allowed.
  - Edits will verify the new MBI format.
- All applicable fields in Xpeditor can accommodate the 11-digit format.
- The eligibility product can accommodate the new format.

Quadax is committed to working with its clients to ensure a smooth transition from HICN identifiers to MBIs. Stay tuned to our official communication channels for forthcoming information as we update our products to facilitate the new MBI format.

Additional Resources from CMS

- Guidance on how to talk to patients about this change:
https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/New-Medicare-Card/New-Medicare-Card-Messaging-Guidelines-July-2017.pdf

- Additional information for providers:
https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/New-Medicare-Card/Providers/Providers.html

- Additional information to assist patients:
https://www.cms.gov/medicare/new-medicare-card/nmc-home.html