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Medicare to Issue New ID Cards with Unique ID Numbers

Medicare will issue new ID cards with a new unique, randomly-assigned number called a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) to replace the existing Social Security-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN). They will start mailing new cards to people with Medicare benefits in April 2018. All Medicare cards will be replaced by April 2019.

This is being implemented to eliminate the use of Social Security numbers (SSN) from Medicare ID cards. The instances of identity theft due to the use of SSNs are well known and many insurance carriers have already moved to this method of identification.

CMS is making several avenues available to providers to make this change easier for you and your business operations. There is a 21-month transition period where all healthcare providers will be able to use either the MBI or the HICN for billing purposes.

Therefore, even though your systems will need to be able to accept the new MBI format by April 2018, you can continue to bill and file healthcare claims using a patient's HICN during the transition period.

Beginning in April 2018, Medicare patients will provide their new ID numbers to be included in your demographic data.

There are a number of resources available to help you prepare for this transition. Here are a few of them.

1. Go to the CMS provider [website](#) and [sign-up](#) for the weekly MLN Connects® newsletter.
2. Attend CMS [quarterly calls](#) to get more information. CMS will let you know when calls are scheduled in the MLN Connects newsletter.
3. Test your system changes and work with your IT billing office staff to be sure your staff is ready to use the new [MBI format](#).

To learn more, visit:

[cms.gov/Medicare/SSNRI/Providers/Providers.html](https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/SSNRI/Providers/Providers.html)