

May 8, 2007

«PROVIDER_NAME»
«SUITE»
«MAILING_ADDRESS»
«CITY» «ST» «ZIP»

Re: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona (BCBSAZ) Contingency Plan for National Provider Identifier (NPI) after the 05/23/07 Compliance Deadline

Dear Provider,

BCBSAZ strives to be an industry leader in meeting the requirements of HIPAA, including NPI. Due to extensive efforts over the last three years, BCBSAZ will be able to accept and process NPIs for institutional, medical and dental claims as well as claim status and member status inquiries by the mandated deadline of May 23, 2007.

We recognize that many providers have experienced difficulty in obtaining NPIs, in making the required changes to office management systems, and/or in registering NPIs with health plans and EDI trading partners. In addition, the availability of the NPI data from the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) has been delayed. As a result, many healthcare providers and trading partners may not be ready for the May 23, 2007 compliance date, and there is increasing concern over potential processing and service disruptions in the industry.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently issued guidance on enforcement of NPI requirements. CMS is allowing covered entities to develop a contingency plan to reach full NPI compliance. BCBSAZ is implementing a contingency plan to help ensure a smooth transition to NPI after May 23, 2007. To help avoid business disruption, for both electronic and paper transactions, BCBSAZ will accept the following billing combinations:

- 1) Legacy identifier only (as described below).
- 2) Legacy and NPI.
- 3) NPI only. (A provider or vendor that wishes to submit claims with NPI only, must notify BCBSAZ of the NPI before submission.)

This will help ensure we maintain current service levels with our providers while they continue to pursue enumeration and registration with health plans.

To accommodate the contingency options the following processes and/or procedures will need to take place.

- 1) BCBSAZ will eliminate your current Provider AZ number (Legacy ID), as indicated in the April/May BCBSAZ Provider Newsletter. For all transactions conducted on and after May 20, 2007, BCBSAZ will use your NPI as your provider number. If you have not notified BCBSAZ of your NPI, BCBSAZ will assign you a new legacy identifier number. BCBSAZ will notify applicable providers of the new legacy number (P number) by separate letter (to follow shortly after the receipt of this letter).

- 2) Effective May 20, 2007 you must use either your NPI or, if applicable, your newly assigned legacy identifier (P number) when accessing the BCBSAZ Voice Response Unit (VRU) phone inquiry system. **Your current AZ number will no longer be valid for use in the VRU phone inquiry system.**
- 3) After May 23, 2008, legacy numbers will NOT be permitted on ANY inbound and outbound transactions.

If you have not yet done so, you should obtain your NPI now. You can apply on line at <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/> on the CMS website. You should also make sure that your billing staffs begin to include your NPI on your claims as soon as possible.

We appreciate your continued support. If you have any questions, please contact your network contract specialist or the BCBSAZ Network Relations Department at (602) 864-4231 or (800) 232-2345 ext. 4231.

Thank you,



Lori Lamprecht
Sr. Manager, Provider Network