



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Board of Registration In Medicine

NATIONAL **P**ROVIDER **I**DENTIFIER

What is the “NPI number” and why does a physician need to apply for it?

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) mandates the use of the NPI, which is a National Provider Identifier number and a unique identifier for health care providers. Every health care provider who chooses to transmit any health information in electronic form will be required to obtain and use an NPI number. This includes physicians and other health care practitioners.

Will the NPI number replace the DEA, EIN, or TIN numbers?

No, the NPI number will replace only the PIN number. Health care providers will be required to use an NPI number as of **May 23, 2007**.

How did the NPI number initiative evolve in Massachusetts?

The Massachusetts Health Data Consortium (MHDC) which is a nonprofit, private corporation, was established by the State’s major public and private healthcare organizations. The MHDC was instrumental in convening a subcommittee to address the NPI implementation and for collaboration of communication between payers and providers.

Who is responsible for issuing the NPI?

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has developed the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) to assign the NPI number.

The NPPES will store all NPI-related information, process applications and updates, generate NPI’s, produce reports and information based on requests from the health care industry and other organizations.

What is the role of the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine in obtaining the NPI number?

The Board of Registration in Medicine is the designated repository for the NPI number for Massachusetts licensed physicians. The “designated repository” status means that the Board can process a request for an NPI number on behalf of any Massachusetts physician. A physician may choose to (1) obtain his/her own NPI number, (2) have a hospital or health plan secure the number on his/her behalf, or (3) take advantage of this free service from the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine by completing the NPI application included with the regular license initial or renewal application form.

The Board voted that as of January 1, 2006, applying for the NPI number will be required as a condition for initial and renewal of full licenses.

If a physician's license was already renewed, should he/she apply for the NPI now or wait until the next renewal cycle?

A physician who has already renewed his/her license should apply for the NPI number as soon as possible and choose one of the following options: 1) Apply for the NPI number at the CMS website at <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES> or 2) authorize the Board to apply for the NPI on his/her behalf. If a physician applies for the NPI through the CMS website, he/she must complete the NPI Reporting form at the Board's website to report the NPI number to the Board after the number is issued.

How will the Board inform a physician that the NPI number has been received?

When the Board receives a physician's NPI number, the physician will be notified by e-mail and a confirmation letter with the NPI number will be sent to the physician's mailing address. The NPI number will also be available on the Board's license verification website where health care providers can access the information with a password if authorization is provided by the physician to the Board.

Will the Board of Registration in Medicine keep my NPI number confidential?

Yes, the Board of Registration in Medicine will NOT disclose your NPI number unless you authorize the Board to disseminate your NPI number to authorized hospitals, health plans or health organizations.

Will a physician ever have to apply for a new NPI number?

No, the NPI number will be the same regardless of whether a physician practices medicine in Massachusetts or in any other state. However, it is the physician's responsibility to notify the CMS when there is a change of address.

When is a physician required to start to use the NPI number?

When a physician receives the NPI number, it should be used with the current provider number. The healthcare facility and health plan providers will inform physicians regarding when they should use only the NPI number for reimbursement.

If a physician is participating in a residency/fellowship training in Massachusetts and plans to move to another state, will he/she have to apply for a new NPI number?

No, the NPI number is required by the Federal government and will not change if a physician leaves Massachusetts. However, he/she must notify the Board of Registration in Medicine, in writing, when his/her address changes (address change form is available at the Board's website) and must notify CMS at <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES>.

If a physician has an inactive license and does not practice medicine, is he/she required to apply for an NPI?

No, an inactive licensee is not required to have an NPI number. However, if the status changes from inactive to active the physician will be required to apply for an NPI number. See the NPI instructions form at the Board's website.

How can my state board become a data repository for the NPI?

For additional information, please contact: Roberta Zackman from BCBSMA, Roberta.Zackman@bcbsma.com or by telephone at (617) 246-7697.

You may access the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine's website at www.massmedboard.org for additional information and NPI forms.