

## **PRACTICE ALERT**

### ***ATTENTION CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS: AVOID MEDICARE CLAIM REJECTIONS IN 2020***

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**January 2020**

The Medicare Access and Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization ACT (MACRA) requires the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to remove Social Security Numbers (SSNs) from all Medicare cards. As a result, CMS has replaced SSNs with new randomly generated Medicare Beneficiary Identifiers (MBIs). The new cards are expected to offer better identity protection to Medicare beneficiaries. CMS has completed its distribution of new Medicare cards to Medicare beneficiaries. The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has also completed its mailing of new Medicare cards with MBIs.

#### **What Does This Mean For Clinical Social Workers?**

Beginning January 1, 2020, clinical social workers (CSWs), who are in independent practice and provide psychotherapy services to Medicare beneficiaries, must submit Medicare claims using the new MBIs to avoid claim rejections. Otherwise, Medicare will automatically reject any claims submitted with SSNs. Rejected claims sent by Medicare to CSWs may specify the following information:

***Electronic claims – reject codes***

- Claims Status Category Code of A7 (acknowledgment rejected for invalid information)
- Claims Status Code of 164 (entity's contract/member number)
- Entity Code of IL (subscriber)

***Paper claims – reject codes***

- Claim Adjustment Reason Code (CARC) 16 (claim/service lacks information or has submission/billing error)
- Remittance Advice Remark Code (RARC) N382 (missing/incomplete/invalid patient identifier)

To also avoid rejections, CSWs should use the new MBI in the same way the health insurance card number (HICN) was used on the CMS 1500 form and its electronic counterpart. In addition, no hyphens or spaces should be used. They should also request their Medicare patients to provide their new Medicare card and maintain a copy of it in their clinical files for billing purposes. Patients who do not have a new Medicare card may obtain one by contacting Medicare at <https://www.mymedicare.gov/> or 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227).

Medicare Advantage Plans continue to assign and use their own identifiers on their health insurance cards. For patients in these plans, CSWs should continue to ask for and use their Medicare Advantage health insurance cards.

CSWs who have questions may contact their Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) for additional information. To find a MAC, visit <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/New-Medicare-Card/Providers/MACs-Provider-Portals-by-State.pdf>. Additional information about Medicare is available at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)