

## PRACTICE ALERT

# *Clinical Social Workers Be Aware: New Claim Change Coming*

Mirean Coleman, LICSW, CT

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) of 2015 requires removal of the Social Security-Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) from all Medicare cards by April 2019. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced a plan to remove Social Security numbers from Medicare cards beginning April 2018 through April 2019. The Social Security numbers will be replaced by a new number called the Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) which will help to prevent fraud, identity theft, and protect private healthcare and financial information of Medicare beneficiaries. The MBI will be 11 characters in length and contain numbers and uppercase letters. The identifier has no specific nor hidden meaning.

### **How does this affect clinical social workers?**

Beginning April 2018, clinical social workers who are Medicare providers in private practice will need to update their patient files to include the new Medicare number and use it on the CMS-1500 form when submitting a

claim. In addition, other systems may need to be updated to accept the new MBI format by April 2018. CMS is providing a 21 month transition period where clinical social workers will be able to use either the MBI or the Social Security-HICN for billing purposes.

As CMS releases additional information, NASW will keep its members abreast of implementation requirements for providers. In the meantime, clinical social workers can help with the transition by making their Medicare patients aware of the new MBI and contacting their billing staff and software vendors to ensure they will be able to accommodate the change in a timely manner.

**Additional information is available at the following link:**

**[www.cms.gov/Medicare/New-Medicare-Card/index.html](http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/New-Medicare-Card/index.html)**