



**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid  
Services  
Office of Technology Solutions**

**Health Insurance Portability and  
Accountability Act (HIPAA) Eligibility  
Transaction System: HETS 270/271**

**New Medicare Card Project  
Release Summary Document**

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## 1. Introduction

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The purpose of this document is to inform submitters of upcoming changes to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Eligibility Transaction System (HETS) 270/271 application, which will be implemented with HETS 270/271 New Medicare Card Project Release.

## 2. Overview of Release

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The HETS New Medicare Card Project Release introduces several changes to the HETS 270 request and 271 response.

The following section documents the details for HETS 270/271 New Medicare Card Project changes.

## 3. Summary of Impact on Trading Partners

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### 3.1 New Medicare Card Project – New Medicare Number

Medicare is taking steps to [remove Social Security numbers](#) from Medicare cards. In April 2018, Medicare beneficiaries will begin receiving new Medicare cards. Medicare expects to mail all cards by April 2019. Medicare will replace the current Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) with a unique, randomly generated number known as the Medicare Beneficiary Identifier or MBI. The MBI has “non-intelligent” characters that do not have any hidden or special meaning.

Providers who currently send Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) Medicare claims to the RRB Specialty Medicare Administrative Contractor will notice the following changes with the new cards:

- Providers will no longer be able to distinguish people with Railroad Medicare by the number on the card.
- The RRB will continue to send cards with the RRB logo to beneficiaries with Railroad Medicare.
- HETS will return a message on the [eligibility transaction](#) response for a Railroad Medicare patient. The message will say “Railroad Retirement Medicare Beneficiary” in 271 Loop 2110C, Segment MSG.
- Providers may contact you to find out how to get this and other information.

There will be a [transition period](#) where Medicare will accept either the HICN or the MBI in data exchanges. The transition period will begin no earlier than April 1, 2018, and run through December 31, 2019.

Check the [New Medicare Card](#) webpages for detailed information about this project.

## 3.2 HETS Support of the MBI

Effective in April 2018, HETS will accept the MBI on 270 requests. Effective with this release and throughout the transition period ending December 31, 2019, HETS will accept either the MBI or HICN on 270 requests. HETS Submitters will submit either the MBI or HICN in the 270 2100C NM109 element, and will use the same 270 2100C NM108 qualifier as today. Assuming that all other Medicare Beneficiary data matches, HETS will respond as outlined in Table 1: HETS HICN & MBI Processing During the New Medicare Card Transition Period.

**Table 1: HETS HICN & MBI Processing During the New Medicare Card Transition Period**

Subscriber Primary Identifier Sent on 270 Request	HETS 271 Response	Comments
Medicare HICN	Medicare HICN	<p>If a HICN is sent on the 270 request, HETS will return a HICN in the 271 response.</p> <p>Additionally, if certain criteria are met, HETS will return a 2110C MSG segment of “CMS mailed a Medicare card with a new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) to this beneficiary. Medicare providers, please get the new MBI from your patient and save it in your system(s).” This additional MSG segment will be returned when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new Medicare card with an MBI number has been mailed to the Medicare Beneficiary.</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Medicare Beneficiary is currently enrolled in traditional Medicare and not a Medicare Advantage plan. Medicare Advantage plans will continue to assign and use their own identifiers on their health insurance cards. For patients in these plans, Medicare providers/suppliers should continue to ask for and use the Medicare Advantage plans’ health insurance cards.</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Medicare Beneficiary does not have a Date of Death on file.</li> </ul>

Subscriber Primary Identifier Sent on 270 Request	HETS 271 Response	Comments
MBI	MBI	<p>If an MBI is sent on the 270 request, HETS will return an MBI in the 271 response.</p> <p>Additionally, If the individual qualifies for Medicare under RRB, HETS will return a 2110C MSG segment of "Railroad Retirement Medicare Beneficiary."</p>

HETS will continue to accept either the Medicare HICN or the MBI until December 31, 2019. Effective January 1, 2020, HETS will only accept the MBI. Any 270 requests containing a HICN will receive a 271 2100C AAA error as outlined in Table 2: HETS HICN & MBI Processing After the New Medicare Card Transition Period.

**Table 2: HETS HICN & MBI Processing After the New Medicare Card Transition Period**

Subscriber Primary Identifier Sent on 270 Request	HETS 271 Response	Comments
Medicare HICN	2100C AAA error	Effective January 1, 2020, HETS will only accept the MBI.
MBI	MBI	<p>If an MBI is sent on the 270 request, HETS will return an MBI in the 271 response.</p> <p>Additionally, if the individual qualifies for Medicare under RRB, HETS will return a 2110C MSG segment of "Railroad Retirement Medicare Beneficiary."</p>

CMS encourages all HETS Submitters to migrate their systems to submit the MBI as soon as the new Medicare card and number is available.

Medicare Beneficiary's new MBI numbers can be replaced in specific circumstances. If a Medicare Beneficiary's MBI number has been changed, then HETS will accept historical 270 requests with either a) the new MBI or b) the old MBI number only if the old MBI was active during the Date(s) of Service submitted on the request.

If either the Medicare HICN or MBI fail to meet CMS Medicare Beneficiary matching rules, then HETS will return a 271 2100C AAA03 value of '72' as it does today. All other normal Medicare Beneficiary matching rules apply to the MBI. Refer to Section 7.3 of the HETS 270/271 Companion Guide for additional information.