

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
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Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850



Medicare Plan Payment Group
Enterprise Systems Solutions Group

DATE: **January 17, 2018**

TO: All Medicare Advantage, Prescription Drug Plan, Cost, PACE, and Demonstration
Organizations Systems Staff

FROM: Jennifer Harlow /s/
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SUBJECT: **Advance Announcement of the February 2018 Software Release**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) continues to implement software improvements to the enrollment and payment systems that support Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MAPD) programs. This letter provides advanced information regarding the planned release of systems changes scheduled for February 2018. This release focuses on improving the efficiency of CMS systems as well as Plan processing.

The February 2018 Release changes will include the following:

1. [**Medicare Beneficiary Database Suite of Systems \(MBDSS\) Notification of the Medicare Beneficiary Identifier \(MBI\) to External Partners**](#)
2. [**New Medicare Card Project – MARx Changes**](#)

1. Medicare Beneficiary Database Suite of Systems (MBDSS) Notification of the Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) to External Partners

As part of the New Medicare Card Initiative, formerly the Social Security Number Removal Initiative (SSNRI), the Medicare Access and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Reauthorization Act (MACRA) of 2015 requires that CMS remove Social Security Numbers (SSNs) from all Medicare cards by April 2019. The New Medicare Card Project will issue new Medicare cards to all beneficiaries, and the Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) will replace the SSN-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN).

During the transition to the MBI between April 2018 and December 2019, Medicare Advantage Organizations and Part D Sponsors will be able to submit data using either the HICN or MBI on all input transaction types such as the BEQ Request File

At the start of the MBI transition period (April 2018), CMS will remove the HICN and replace it with the MBI on all MBDSS output data files/reports that are transmitted to Plans.

The MBDSS stores Medicare Part C and D enrollment and enrollment-related data for Plans. The following MBDSS output files will be changed to include the MBI:

- Auto Assignment PDP Notification File
- BEQ Response File
- Medicare Advantage Full Dual Notification File
- No Prescription Notification File

2. New Medicare Card Project – MARx Changes

During the transition period between April 2018 and December 2019, Medicare Advantage Organizations and Part D Sponsors will be able to submit data using either the HICN or MBI on all input transaction types, including any online interaction with the MARx UI. MARx output data files/reports will contain the MBI **only**. Before MBI transition, all data file fields that currently display the HICN will be labeled Beneficiary ID rather than HICN, but the HICN will be populated in the field. During and after MBI transition, the fields will continue to be labeled Beneficiary ID, yet the MBI will be populated to the field.

Questions that are MARx-related to the implementation of the New Medicare Card Project can be emailed to MARXSSNRI@cms.hhs.gov.

Plans are encouraged to contact the MAPD Help Desk for any issues encountered during the systems update process. Please direct any questions or concerns to the MAPD Help Desk at 1-800-927-8069 or e-mail at mapdhelp@cms.hhs.gov.