

**Testing and Other Help Available Before the October 16, 2003 Compliance Date for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Transaction and Code Set Standards  
July 16, 2003**

Dear Medicare Provider,

Will you be ready to bill Medicare effective October 16?

Should you be concerned about getting your Medicare claims paid starting October 16? If you are not ready to use the HIPAA standard transaction code sets by October 16, you may not get paid!

HIPAA is more than a privacy law; it touches many aspects of healthcare, including the bills you submit to all health insurers, not just Medicare. Effective October 16, 2003, all electronic transactions covered by HIPAA must comply with these standards for format and content. For example, the electronic claim that a physician or hospital sends to a health plan must be compliant and health plans are only allowed to process compliant transactions. Any non-compliant claims submitted after the October deadline will be returned to you, unpaid.

You may have thought that you can still submit paper bills to Medicare, but in many cases, this is not true. The Administrative Simplification Compliance Act (ASCA) includes a provision that requires electronic submissions to Medicare effective October 16, 2003, with a few exceptions.

CMS and its contractors are eager to help you through this transition. Testing with your carrier or fiscal intermediary is required to assure that you and your business partners can send and receive HIPAA compliant transactions. Medicare contractors are ready to test with you now! To schedule testing, contact your Medicare carrier or fiscal intermediary. For more information, please review the helpful HIPAA resources, shown below.

Although we have all been working hard to achieve HIPAA compliance and the benefits it will bring, there is still much to be done. Time is growing short; please be sure to test and start sending and receiving HIPAA compliant transactions as early as possible to avoid any last minute problems.

Thomas Scully

Administrator  
Centers For Medicaid and Medicare Services

For additional information, please contact:

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## Helpful HIPPA Resources

### Upcoming Satellite Broadcasts

- **HIPAA 101-The Basics of Administrative Simplifications**

**July 16, 2003**

**2:00-3:00 p.m. ET**

**July 30, 2003**

**2:00-3:00 p.m. ET**

[www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn)

- **Register to be a Host Site for Satellite Broadcasts**

[www.cms.hhs.gov/hipaa/hipaa2](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/hipaa/hipaa2)

- **General HIPAA Information**
- **Educational Materials**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**
- **HIPAA Administrative Simplification Information Series for Providers**
- **Links to Additional HIPAA Web Pages**

[www.eventstreams.com/cms/tm](http://www.eventstreams.com/cms/tm) **001**

- **View HIPAA Educational Webcast**
- **Topics:**
- **HIPAA Basics**
- **Provider Steps for Getting Paid Under HIPAA**

[AskHIPAA@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:AskHIPAA@cms.hhs.gov)

- **Request answers to your HIPAA Administrative Simplifications Questions**

**1-866-282-0659**

**HIPAA Hotline Staff will answer your HIPAA Administrative Simplification**

- **Questions or Direct you to the appropriate Resources**

### Local Carriers and Fiscal Intermediaries

- **HIPAA Scheduling and Testing**