

## **HIPAA Claims Testing Notification**

Between now and October, the health care industry must address the challenge of becoming compliant with the transaction and code set standards under HIPAA. Effective October 16, 2003, administrative transactions (like claims and remittance advice's) that are done electronically must meet new HIPAA regulatory standards for format and content.

Although this is a significant undertaking, the result will greatly enhance electronic communication throughout the health care community. Successful implementation will require the attention and cooperation of all health plans and clearinghouses, and of all providers that conduct electronic transactions.

Communication between trading partners as well as early testing is vitally important. Providers need to make sure their software vendors or billing services have made necessary changes so that they are ready to test with payers in a timely manner. **Experience has shown that testing can take over 1 month.**

Our combined goal must be that on October 17, everyone is using the HIPAA standards and that no one notices any difference. We urge you to focus your attention and resources necessary to make this goal a reality. If testing is not performed timely, provider cash flow could be jeopardized, and, with that, comes the danger of impacting patients' access to health care. That's not an outcome anyone wants to occur.

Some have expressed concern that further changes will be made to the designated formats and therefore they don't want to test until they know changes are final. The current HIPAA standards will be in effect through 2003 and for several more years.

Medicare will only accept and send HIPAA formatted transactions after October 16, 2003. All non-HIPAA formats currently supported by Medicare (such as the National Standard Format for claim and remittance advice, the UB92, the 837 (3051) and 835 (3051)) will not be updated beyond October 16, 2003, nor accepted or sent.

The Companion Guide for CareFirst Medicare Part A is located at [http://www.marylandmedicare.com/pages/mdmedicare/hipaa/hipaa\\_main.htm](http://www.marylandmedicare.com/pages/mdmedicare/hipaa/hipaa_main.htm) This document contains important information required for processing data in the Medicare-FISS system of CareFirst Medicare-A Contractor number 00190.

**To begin testing the HIPAA 4010A1 format, please contact the EDI department.**

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