

Preparing for HIPAA Transactions

HIPAA Transactions Are Your Responsibility!

The HIPAA law is clear—October 16, 2003 is the deadline for covered entities to comply with the HIPAA transaction and code set mandate. Many doctors and healthcare providers think of HIPAA as a privacy issue but HIPAA is about more than just privacy. It's also about transactions. In other words, HIPAA transactions are about getting paid.

HIPAA transactions are your responsibility if you want to continue to get paid or if you do not want your cash flow interrupted. As a covered entity, it is your responsibility to ensure that as of October 16, 2003, the transactions that you conduct electronically with your payers or the transactions that are conducted on

your behalf by a billing service or clearinghouse – must be compliant with the requirements of the HIPAA law. The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) in partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) strongly encourages providers to intensify their efforts toward achieving transaction and code set compliance.

You and your electronic billing partners should be working towards becoming HIPAA compliant as quickly as possible. Please take advantage of the time that is left to work closely with them. They should be testing your claims right now with your payers to ensure that your cash flow is not interrupted.

THE BOTTOM LINE: WHAT YOU MUST DO NOW TO KEEP GETTING PAID

If You Partner With a Software Vendor:

Communicate with your software vendor NOW. Make sure your vendor is prepared to provide you with software that produces HIPAA compliant transactions. Remember, it's your responsibility to make sure your claims are HIPAA compliant.

According to the HIPAA law, if your electronic claims are not HIPAA compliant then they cannot be accepted by your payers. If they are not accepted they cannot be paid.

Your vendor should have supplied you upgraded software that will allow you to conduct electronic transactions according to HIPAA standards. They should also be testing their software with you and your payers.

If You Partner With a Billing Service:

Do not assume that your vendor or clearinghouse is HIPAA compliant. Is your billing service listed as an approved vendor by your payers? If they are not, contact them immediately and ask what steps they are taking to get on the list.

If you do not like their responses, you may want to make a change.

If you are using a clearinghouse or billing service, make sure they are prepared for HIPAA. Ask about their HIPAA implementation plans. Are they on schedule? Then ask to see your test claim results with each of your payers. Make sure that the claims that they process on your behalf are HIPAA compliant with Medicaid, Medicare and all your other payers.

It's Your Bottom Line. Take Responsibility.

It is your responsibility to make sure that your electronic claims are HIPAA compliant by October 16, 2003 – regardless of who is submitting them for payment. If your billing service is not on our approved vendor lists then you may not get paid.

To review the most recent [Approved Vendor Lists](#) for Medicaid, BCBSM or Medicare go to www.michigan.gov/mdch (click on Providers, then HIPAA, and then on Implementation Materials and you will see the heading "Approved Vendor Lists").

If you are uncomfortable with the responses you are getting from your billing service, encourage them to contact MDCH at automatedbilling@michigan.gov.

Comprehensive Information:

Michigan Medicaid

www.michigan.gov/mdch
(click on Providers, then HIPAA, then select Implementation Materials)
1-800-292-2550
providersupport@michigan.gov

Medicaid Claims Testing:
Jim Kunz at kunzj@michigan.gov

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

www.bcbsm.com/providers/hipacentral.shtml
(click on HIPAA Central)

BCBSM Help Desk:
Telephone: 248-486-2292
Trading Partner Agreement (press 2)
EDI Testing (press 3)
Help Desk Analyst (press 6)