



**For Immediate Release**

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**Cooperate Exchange Offers Recommendations for NPI Implementation**

**Dallas, Tx - Nov. 29, 2006** -- Cooperate Exchange, an organization which promotes electronic transactions for the health care industry by ensuring optimal quality, value and functionality, today announces its recommendations for National Provider Identifier (NPI) implementation.

Under HIPAA regulations, health care providers can submit electronic transactions using only their National Provider Identifier (NPI) as their standard unique identifier, which replaces health plan assigned identifiers, among others.

Until health plans can accept the NPI without legacy identifiers, clearinghouses must be able to map an NPI to the appropriate legacy identifier per health plan. Because it is unlikely that all providers and health plans will have implemented systems changes to accommodate the NPI by May 23, 2007, clearinghouses must be capable of providing legacy identifiers to avoid payment disruptions.

Today, using a dual approach developed by the Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange (WEDI), most Cooperative Exchange member clearinghouses are currently accepting electronic transactions with the NPI and will map the NPI to legacy identifiers for health plans until they are prepared to accept the NPI. This allows both the providers and health plans to comply with the NPI regulations.

However, many Cooperative Exchange clearinghouses also support a crosswalk methodology that uses the NPI, as well as other provider identifiers, to determine the appropriate legacy identifiers for each health plan. Appreciating that mapping the NPI to from legacy identifiers is not trivial, the Cooperative Exchange offers the following recommendations:

- 7 Encourage providers to get their NPIs and provide all their legacy identifiers to the NPPES. This may include serving as an EFIO to secure NPIs for clients.
- 7 Require clearinghouses accept transactions with an NPI and use the information provided to develop an NPI crosswalk to legacy identifiers.
- 7 Validate NPIs with the NPPES data, when available, and resolve any differences.

- 7 Request NPPES provide all data fields available in HIPAA transactions to facilitate the development and validation of NPI crosswalks.
- 7 Urge health plans to use NPI crosswalks to map to legacy identifiers rather than forcing providers to apply for multiple NPIs to replicate current identifiers.
- 7 Collaborate with WEDI and other organizations to help ensure a smooth NPI transition.

### **About the Cooperative Exchange**

The Cooperative Exchange was established to expand electronic health care transactions among participants in the health care industry. Its members include: Affiliated Computer Services (ACS), Affiliated Network Services, LLC (ANS), Availity, L.L.C., Claimsnet.com, Electronic Network Systems, Inc., Gateway EDI, Inc., HDM Corporation, Legacy Systems, The SSI Group, Inc., THIN, Inc. Its goals include:

- 7 Allow payers to establish a connection with one or more Cooperative Exchange members in order to gain access to an expanded provider base. This allows a payer to maximize its resources, while providing broader availability of its transactions,
- 7 Increase competition,
- 7 Shorten the timeline within which all healthcare participants can realize an ROI on HIPAA initiatives

The Cooperative Exchange provides open access for member organizations in order to promote electronic transactions for the healthcare industry by ensuring optimal quality, value and functionality.

For more information on the Cooperative Exchange please visit [www.cooperativeexchange.org](http://www.cooperativeexchange.org) or contact Tim McMullen, Executive Director, Cooperative Exchange: [jtmcmullen@mac.com](mailto:jtmcmullen@mac.com) or (866) 238-4440. For a complete copy of the Cooperative Exchange position paper on the NPI send an email to [CENPI@affnetserv.com](mailto:CENPI@affnetserv.com)