

CMS Relaxes Provider Enrollment Requirements Amid COVID-19 Crisis

By Jennifer Wintergerst

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CMS is using its authority under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act to provide some flexibility with Medicare provider enrollment in order to allow practitioners to enter the program more expeditiously and to relieve some of the burdens on the system.

Physicians and Non-Physician Practitioners

CMS has established toll-free hotlines to enroll providers and allow them to receive temporary Medicare billing privileges. The following screening requirements will be waived during this period:

- Criminal background checks associated with fingerprint-based criminal background checks (FCBC) - 42 C.F.R 424.518 (to the extent applicable)
- Site visits - 42 C.F.R 424.517
- Postpone all revalidation actions

The hotline will provide Medicare temporary billing privileges and address questions until the public health emergency declaration is lifted.

The hotline numbers can also be used for physicians and non-physician practitioners to report a change in practice location.

The hotlines are operational Monday – Friday.

CGS Administrators, LLC (CGS)

- Toll-free Hotline: 1-855-769-9920
Hours of Operation: 7:00 am – 4:00 pm CT

First Coast Service Options Inc. (FCSO)

- Toll-free Hotline: 1-855-247-8428
Hours of Operation: 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM EST

National Government Services (NGS)

- Toll-free Hotline: 1-888-802-3898
Hours of Operation: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm CT

National Supplier Clearinghouse (NSC)

- Toll-free Hotline: 1-866-238-9652
Hours of Operation: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET

Novitas Solutions, Inc.

- Toll-free Hotline: 1-855-247-8428
- Hours of Operation: 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM EST

Noridian Healthcare Solutions

- Toll-free Hotline: 1-866-575-4067
- Hours of Operation: 8:00 am – 6:00 pm CT

Palmetto GBA

- Toll-free Hotline: 1-833-820-6138
- Hours of Operation: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm ET

Wisconsin Physician Services (WPS)

- Toll-free Hotline: 1-844-209-2567
- Hours of Operation: 7:00 am – 4:00 pm CT

To initiate temporary privileges, the physicians and non-physician practitioners will be asked to provide:

- Legal Name
- National Provider Identifier (NPI)
- Social Security Number
- Valid in-state or out-of-state license
- Address
- Contact information (telephone number)

The Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) will attempt to screen and enroll the physician or non-physician practitioner over the phone and will notify them of their approval or rejection of temporary Medicare billing privileges during the phone conversation. The MAC will then follow-up with a letter via email.

The assigned effective dates will be as early as March 1, 2020. Practitioners may bill for services furnished on or after the effective date.

Once the national emergency is lifted, the physician and non-physician practitioners will need to submit a complete CMS 855 application in order to establish full Medicare billing privileges. Failure to respond to the MAC's request within 30 days of the notification, will result in the deactivation of the temporary billing privileges.

All Other Providers and Suppliers (including DMEPOS)

The hotline cannot be used by other providers and suppliers, but CMS will expedite any pending or new applications. All clean web applications will be processed within 7 business days and all clean paper applications will be processed within 14 business days.

CMS will waive the following screening requirements for all enrollment applications received on or after March 1, 2020:

- Application Fee – 42 C.F.R. 424.514
- Criminal background checks associated with the FCBC – 42 C.F.R. 424.518 (to the extent applicable)
- Site-visits – 42 C.F.R. 424.517
- Postpone all revalidation actions

The Medicare Provider Enrollment Relief Frequently Asked Questions may be found by clicking [here](#).

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