
Program Memorandum

Department of Health and
Human Services (DHHS)

Intermediaries/Carriers

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid
Services (CMS)

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CHANGE REQUEST 2079

SUBJECT: Installation of a New Medicare Customer Service Center (MCSC) Next Generation Desktop (NGD) Application

The purpose of this Program Memorandum (PM) is to inform Medicare contractors, particularly call center managers and data centers, at all carrier and intermediary locations, that CMS is developing a new MCSC NGD application to be deployed at Medicare contractor sites. The new desktop will allow Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) to answer written, telephone, and walk-in inquiries from both providers and beneficiaries. The NGD application will enable CSRs to address, at a minimum, the same general Medicare and claims inquiries currently handled, but in a more user-friendly and efficient manner. The NGD is being developed on requirements gathered from call center personnel currently handling telephone, written, and walk-in inquiries. Although NGD may be found useful by other components interacting with the telephone and written areas, specific requirements are not being identified for those areas.

The initial rollout of NGD will provide contractors with access to information from the VIPS Medicare System (VMS), Fiscal Intermediary Standard System (FISS), and Multi Carrier System (MCS) claims processing systems used today. Initially contractors will only access information and perform the functions required within their existing workload. However, the technology being built into the NGD will ultimately allow contractors to access information outside their service areas and to access additional CMS databases once those business processes have been defined. This increased access will enable contractors to support each other in times of heavy call volumes, disaster situations, emergency closings, and any other downtime as well as to handle more of the calls currently being blocked in the network.

To ensure ongoing operations are consistent with CMS's call center strategy, any contractor call center purchases or developmental costs for hardware, software, or other telecommunications technology that equals or exceeds \$10,000 in a fiscal year require prior approval by CMS. This includes development of existing or new desktop applications. Contractors shall submit all such requests to the servicing regional office (RO) for review. The RO shall forward all recommendations for approval to the Director, Beneficiary Information Services Group (BISG), central office (CO) for a final decision. Provider call center purchases or development costs for hardware, software or other telecommunication technology that exceeds \$10,000 should be forwarded, for final approval, to the Division of Provider Education and Training.

As outlined in the FY 2002 and FY 2003 Budget Performance Requirements (BPRs) Program Management, CMS directs each contractor to prioritize its inquiry workload to ensure that funding is allocated to accomplish the priority goals within the following sequential manner: 1) Telephone Inquiries; 2) Written Inquiries; 3) Walk-in Inquiries; and 4) Beneficiary Outreach. The implementation of the NGD for telephone, written and walk-in inquiries will ultimately improve efficiency in handling those inquiries. Any work associated with the NGD initiative must be considered a priority goal under telephone inquiries. With limited exceptions, the impact to FY 2002 budget will be minimal (e.g. planning meetings, connecting to the data centers). Depending on the contractor's place in the deployment schedule, expenditures incurred by contractors for NGD in FY 2003 will be more significant than in FY 2002. Contractor specific questions should be directed to CMS.

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FUNCTIONALITY BY RELEASE

The NGD is being implemented in three releases with the features and functionality increasing with each release. These dates relate to the development, not the deployment, of NGD. Release dates and major functionality within each release are as follows:

Release 1: July 2002 – September 2002

- Display and maintain beneficiary profile information (interfaces to the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Master Beneficiary Record, CMS's Enrollment Database (EDB) and Common Working File (CWF), and the claims processing system for the DMERC contractors
- Search, display, and perform adjustments on DME claims (interface to VMS for DMERCs)
- Maintain certificates of medical necessity (CMNs)
- Track call history for beneficiaries, providers, and other callers
- Maintain activity / to-do list for CSRs
- Display basic provider information
- Communicate with other contractor departments using automatically-populated Microsoft Word templates
- Search knowledge base of Medicare-related information
- Place orders for items such as duplicate Medicare summary notices and duplicate remittance notices
- Link to contractor-specific Intranet sites
- Launch to windows-based software packages
- Gather system user feedback

Release 2: FY 2003

- Includes all functionality from Release 1 and the standard claims processing systems for the Part A and B contractors
- Search and display Part A and Part B claims (interfaces to FISS for Part A intermediaries and to MCS and VMS for Part B carriers) and perform adjustments for Part B claims
- Display basic Home Health Agency (HHA) and Hospice information including the ability to view claims
- Order replacement Medicare cards

Release 3: FY 2003

- Includes all functionality from Releases 1 and 2
- Provide 1-800-Medicare functionality such as call scripting (English and Spanish), publication ordering, reference center functions, Intranet access, etc., as currently performed by the GT-X Desktop
- Administer 1-800 Customer Surveys
- Incorporate current 1-800 Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), if approved

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH AND SCHEDULE

The following approach and schedule is planned for implementation of the NGD desktop. These dates are subject to revision.

Pilot Phase (4th Quarter, FY 2002)

Beginning in the 4th quarter, FY 2002, a pilot implementation will take place at the AdminaStar Federal DMERC call center in Indianapolis, Indiana. The pilot is expected to last 5-6 weeks.

CIGNA, HealthNow, and AdminaStar Federal DMERC Sites (September - November 2002)

The remaining DMERC call centers, CIGNA and HealthNow, will implement the new system. Due to a broader scope of calls being handled at PalmettoGBA, implementation will occur for that DMERC site at a later date.

Part A and Part B and MCSC/Forte Call Centers, 1-800-Medicare, Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) (Fiscal Year 2003 - 2004)

The remaining call centers are scheduled to implement NGD during FY 2003 and FY 2004. The exact sequence and timing is flexible and will be based on the following criteria:

- The desktop development team is making every effort to ensure that all requirements needed by CSRs to respond to beneficiary and provider inquiries are identified. There may be limited situations where a decision is made not to include a requirement or some functionality in the design of an early release of the desktop. In those cases, impacts will be assessed and the requirement can be added in a later release. With limited exceptions, call centers will not have to implement NGD prior to availability of system functionality they currently have; call centers that currently use CTI functionality will be assessed on a case by case basis
- Call centers will be implemented with consideration to business impact to the Medicare program as a whole
- Input from contractors regarding the desired timing of implementation will be considered
- Other implementation activity and specific circumstances of each call center will be taken into consideration when scheduling deployment dates

Centers Using Non-Standard Claims Processing Systems

Currently, plans provide for the NGD to support FISS, MCS, and VMS (Part B and DMERC) claims processing systems. Centers using other systems will not implement the NGD until they have converted to one of these standard systems.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Hardware

The hardware necessary to implement the NGD application includes Siebel Systems' eHealthcare product, centrally-located servers, and personal computers (PCs).

Siebel

The NGD is being built using Siebel Systems' eHealthcare product. This product employs a "zero footprint" Web-based client, which means that no specialized hardware or software is required on the agents' desks other than a typical Personal Computer (PC) and a Web browser. PCs that will be used to generate correspondence will also require Microsoft Word '97, or a higher version of Word, which will be the responsibility of the Medicare contractor to procure. CMS is purchasing the necessary Siebel software licenses and ongoing Siebel software maintenance contracts.

Servers

All servers needed to run the NGD application will be centrally-located (initially at the AdminaStar Federal data center in Louisville, KY). Each call center site will access the servers via the Medicare Data Communications Network (MDCN); CMS currently uses AT&T Global Network Services (AGNS) to provide service to the MDCN. Prior to implementation, each call center's network configuration will be evaluated to ensure that sufficient network bandwidth will be available.

Firewalls

All Internet Protocol (IP) access to the MDCN/AGNS network will be firewall protected. Each call center will be responsible for the installation and configuration of a firewall solution between themselves and the MDCN/AGNS network. Call centers will access the NGD system via IP. Current plans are to provide access to the mainframe processing systems at the data centers via IBM's System Network Architecture (SNA). SNA connectivity will not require firewall protection. Future plans may include access to the mainframe processing systems via IP; however, CMS will work closely with the data centers if and when this option becomes available. The contractors are only responsible for having the firewall(s) implemented at their call centers and/or data centers.

Personal Computers

Listed below are the minimum PC requirements for CSRs using the NGD.

Minimum Requirements for an NGD Personal Computer

Processor:	Pentium II 233MHz or comparable AMD or Cyrix
Disk Space:	10MB available
Memory:	64 MB (more recommended for running multiple applications simultaneously with the NGD)
Operating System:	One of the following 4 options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows 98 SE • Window ME • Windows NT Workstation 4.0 with Service Pak 6a • Windows 2000
Browser:	Internet Explorer 5.5 Service Pack 2
Monitor:	15" (17" or larger is preferable)
Pointing Device:	Mouse
Network Interface	Network Interface Card compatible with the call center LAN, which will ultimately allow workstation access to AGNS

Organizations that will be procuring new PCs because they currently do not have PCs or because they need to upgrade for reasons other than the new NGD application, may want to procure more current PC technology. While the minimum PC requirements should be used to evaluate if existing desktops systems are adequate, the following suggested configuration provides guidance when new hardware is purchased:

Guidance for New PCs If and Only If Existing PCs Do Not Meet Minimum Requirements

Processor:	1.0 GHz Processor (Pentium, Celeron, or AMD)
Disk Space:	20 GB Hard Drive
Memory:	256 MB minimum
Operating System:	Windows 2000
Browser:	Internet Explorer 5.5 Service Pack 2
Monitor:	17" or larger
Pointing Device	Mouse with scroll
Network Interface	Network Interface Card compatible with the call center LAN, which will ultimately allow workstation access to AGNS

This hardware should provide good performance running the combination of applications expected of typical NGD users. These applications include, but are not limited, to:

- Next Generation Desktop (using Internet Explorer)
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Outlook (or other email/calendar packages)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader, Folio, or other document viewing software

Personal Computer Software

- Web browser (Internet Explorer 5.5, Service Pack 2)
- Microsoft Word '97 (or higher version) – Required only for generation of correspondence

INTEGRATION METHODS

Standard Systems

Integration between the NGD and VMS, CWF, MCS, and FISS will be accomplished using Jacada's Integrator software product. Jacada uses TN3270 sessions to work with these systems. This allows NGD to be implemented without any changes to the standard systems. Access to CWF will be through the claims systems. The NGD Integration Layer will log and time-stamp all interactions, recording the NGD user, the back-end system user, and the transaction being performed along with the transaction's data. Integration with EDB and MBR will be done using IBM CICS Transaction Client Application Program Interface (API). Access to these systems will be via the CMS Traffic Cop application.

Computer Telephony

CTI is not currently in the scope of the NGD development for Releases 1, 2, and 3. CTI may be integrated in a future release.

IMPACT ON CONTRACTOR RESOURCES

Although implementing the NGD will improve the overall efficiency of the call centers' operations, there will be some short-term impact on resources during the initial implementation. During the period of implementation, CMS will work with the contractor to define the extent of the impact and relax performance standards where it is deemed appropriate. Resources affected include CSRs, trainers, and information services and technology staff.

Call Center CSRs

It is expected that CSRs already trained to handle Medicare inquiries will need to attend 3-4 days of training on the new system. CSRs will continue to answer the same types of inquiries they currently answer today, so training will focus on accessing the same information within the new desktop. Additionally, some reduction in efficiency is expected during the learning curve of first using the new system. As CSRs become proficient with the new environment, efficiency should improve. The CMS will be collecting operational and performance data during the pilot and initial implementations and will have more detailed information to share with contractors as the deployments proceed. New CSRs will need to receive the Medicare program training normally provided by the contractor.

The NGD will include standard CMS-approved scripted language for some Medicare topics to be used by CSRs when responding to inquiries. The purpose of scripted language is to ensure accuracy and consistency of the information conveyed by the call centers.

Trainers

This project will use a "Train the Trainer" approach. This approach requires each contractor to provide trainers and training facilities to instruct CSRs and other call center personnel on how to use the system. Training materials will be provided. The initial "Train the Trainer" classes (covering each contractor's primary line of business) will be 5 days of instruction. An additional 2 days are required for any added line of business (Part A, Part B, DME). "Train the Trainer" classes will be held in a central location or at contractor locations, if warranted by the number of trainees.

The local call center trainers will have the responsibility to train all CSRs on the NGD. The CMS will work with each contractor to determine the best approach for training new CSRs. For example, the training may take a phased approach in which some CSRs are trained while others continue to take calls in the current manner. At some point in time an individual call center may have some CSRs utilizing the current methods, some in training, and others using the NGD if a phased approach is followed. Regardless of the approach followed during the period of implementation, CMS will work with each contractor to define the extent of the impact during the transition and relax performance standards where it is deemed appropriate.

The NGD will have the ability to facilitate national Web-based training. Contractors who wish to have their locally-developed Web-based training accessible directly from the NGD are encouraged to comply with CMS standards. The CMS standards for both print and Web-based training design can be found on the Call Center Learning Resources Web page @

<https://www.hcfa.gov/other/bscm/train.htm>. In addition to the PC requirements outlined previously, in order to fully utilize the national Web-based training modules, contractors will also need to have an audio player capable of playing .wma files (generally Windows Media Player); sound card and speakers (headphones are suggested); and Microsoft Word 97 or higher.

Local System Administration and Content Management

Several administrative functions will be performed at the call center level by contractor personnel. These functions include managing call center-specific content (e.g., procedures, policies, system broadcast messages), integrating existing local applications to the desktop and administering system user IDs.

Information Technology

For those sites that currently have PCs on the CSRs' desktops, little, if any, change in demand for infrastructure support is expected. Connectivity between the NGD servers in Louisville, KY and contractor mainframe claims processing systems (i.e. data center) is planned to be via MDCN/AGNS using SNA. Contractor PCs at Call Centers using the NGD will access the NGD servers in Louisville using MDCN/AGNS via IP.

First level application support will likely be comparable to existing MCSC-Forte and CustomView sites. Support levels for those locations currently using mainframe applications only will probably increase. The call centers will need to provide Level I helpdesk support. Level I helpdesk support will be a focal area for each call center and will begin the resolution process. They will help identify if the issue resides at the call center or if it is an issue that must be resolved outside of the call center. If the issue can be resolved locally, then the normal call center process will be followed. If the issue cannot be handled locally, the local helpdesk will contact the AdminaStar Federal (ASF) helpdesk (Level II). The ASF helpdesk will work to resolve the issue within forthcoming Service Level Agreement standards. If the issue cannot be resolved by the ASF helpdesk, the ASF helpdesk will contact the appropriate NGD resources (Level III), including AT&T for MDCN/AGNS issues. Once resolved, the ASF helpdesk will contact the local helpdesk so any log entries opened there can be closed.

The NGD will have the ability to launch Windows-based PC applications. Any additional integration with local applications will be performed by each call center. Existing call monitoring applications, such as e-Talk Recorder and Witness eQuality Balance, that are integrated with a call center's Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system should continue to function with no change.

IMPACT ON DATA CENTER RESOURCES

Contractors shall work with their respective data centers to ensure Data Center staff performs the following tasks in support of the NGD implementation. These tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Provide a Data Center Point of Contact (POC) to coordinate NGD testing and deployment activities
- Assist in planning for adequate MDCN/AGNS bandwidth and routing changes
- Create and assign standard system mainframe User IDs per CMS/NGD requirements
- Provide TN3270, TCP/IP, or SNA connectivity information and create any required SNA LUs to establish the necessary sessions
- Ensure that claims systems test regions and test data are available as required for system testing

The preceding tasks need to be completed no later than these dates:

Data Center	Tentative Due Date
AdminaStar Federal Inc.	04/12/02
CIGNA	Date Pending
IGS/MCDC1 (HealthNow + others)	Date Pending

Palmetto GBA	07/15/02
First Coast Service Options	07/15/02
EDS – Plano	07/22/02
WPS	07/29/02
Regence BCBS Oregon	08/05/02
BCBS Kansas	08/12/02
EDS – Sacramento	08/19/02
BCBS Arkansas	08/26/02
BCBS Alabama	09/02/02
Highmark	09/09/02
Empire BCBS	09/16/02
BC California	09/30/02
BCBS Mississippi	10/07/02
Regence BCBS Utah	10/14/02
Group Health Inc.	10/14/02
GTE Data Services	*
Mutual of Omaha	*
* These data centers are not currently running VMS, MCS, or FISS and will need to perform these tasks only if they begin to do so.	

After initial testing the following support is required:

- Test regions need to be available during normal business hours beginning when system testing starts and continuing through the deployment of the desktop at all call centers. Availability of test regions will also be required for subsequent quarterly releases.
- Ensure system production regions are available by contractor Go Live date(s)
- Ensure system production regions are available during Call Center hours of operation

NGD ACCESS FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS

It may be desirable for other departments (Correspondence, Benefits Integrity, Medical Review, and so on) to have limited access to the new system. If so, some minimal training for the users from these departments will be required. Using the NGD in other departments will be considered on a case by case basis.

SECURITY ISSUES

Call Center

The Next Generation Desktop will have access to numerous other systems, including the CMS Enrollment Database and the SSA Master Beneficiary Records. Data and physical security procedures at each location using the NGD will need to conform to the approved MCSC Standard.

Mainframe IDs

The Integration layer will perform user authentication to the back end systems using a Logical Unit -User ID connection-pooling approach (aka Master IDs). When a session needs to be used to access a back-end system, a User ID that has the appropriate access rights to that particular system is allocated from the session pool, marked as being in use, and used to process the transaction request to the back-end system. The logs mentioned previously will provide traceability that documents the transactions being performed, who performed them, when they were performed, what User ID and what Logical Unit session, host, and system were used to perform the transaction. This logging

works in conjunction with the auditing performed within the NGD network and will provide a trace mechanism for the back end systems to validate users; much like the current MCSC/Forte system.

STANDARD SYSTEM ISSUES

The Next Generation Desktop relies on extensive interfaces with many standard Medicare systems, operated by CMS as well as contractors. The NGD team will need to be made aware of planned changes to these standard systems well in advance. This will allow time to make sure that the interfaces with the standard systems continue to perform correctly. NGD updates will occur quarterly and will follow the release schedule used for the standard system updates. Once the NGD is implemented, contractors are requested to inform the NGD team of any notifications of changes being planned to the standard systems currently accessed. This will serve as a backup to the current process CMS has in place for notification of systems changes.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING AND SUPPORT

Implementation of the NGD will represent significant change for many call centers. Managers and staff will need to be available for pre-implementation meetings (e.g., conference calls, in-house meetings, completion of surveys, etc.), to provide information about the site in general, the technology used, and to plan for the rollout of the NGD. To minimize the impact of this change, the call centers will be provided with the following assistance:

- Planning for functional, technical, and organizational change
 - Deployment Notebook
 - Deployment Checklist
 - Web site specific to the NGD
 - NGD Newsletters
 - NGD Specific Conference Calls
- Training assistance as described above
- 24 x 7 post-implementation support (on site, if required).

FUTURE CHANGES TO THE NEXT GENERATION DESKTOP

The CMS will implement a Change Control Board that will include representation from the contractor community. Change requests can be submitted in a variety of ways: feedback forms within the NGD system, change requests submitted to the NGD helpdesk, or change request forms posted on the NGD Web site. The change control procedures will be provided in the call center deployment notebook for further reference. New releases of the NGD are expected to follow the current standard mainframe system quarterly release schedule.

RETIREMENT OF REDUNDANT SYSTEMS

After implementation of the NGD, several existing systems will become redundant. These include the current MCSC Forte application, the 1-800 GT-X application and at least some of the CustomView implementations. There may be other contractor or call center specific applications that will also become redundant. Retirement of these redundant applications may involve archival of data and disposition of any surplus hardware. The CMS and the affected contractors will determine the specific tasks required.

The effective and implementation dates for:

- **CMS approval of costs for telecommunications technology equal to, or exceeding, \$10,000 – Upon Receipt**
- **Data Center Tasks – See “Impact of Data Center Resources” section for more information**
- **Pilot phase at AdminaStar Federal DMERC Call Center in Indianapolis, Indiana – Fourth quarter, FY 2002**
- **HealthNow and AdminaStar Federal DMERC Sites deployment – September 02-November 02**

- CIGNA DMERC Sites deployment – FY 2003
- MCSC Forte Sites deployment – tentatively scheduled for 2nd quarter, FY 2003
- Intermediaries and carriers' call centers' sites deployment – FY 2003-FY 2004

Remaining intermediaries and carriers: The FY 2003 NGD deployment schedule for intermediaries and carriers call center sites will be provided in a future PM in early FY 2003. Deployment to the remaining sites will occur in FY 2004.

For DMERCs only: CMS is preparing a contract modification. Do not begin work on this PM until the modification is executed.

These instructions should be implemented within your current operating budget. FY 2003 costs should be included in your budget request.

This PM may be discarded May 31, 2003.

If you have any questions, contact Stephanie Bojanowski at sbojanowski@cms.hhs.gov or Carol Davis at cdavis2@cms.hhs.gov