

# Medlearn Matters

## Information for Medicare Providers



Related Change Request (CR) #: 3195

Medlearn Matters Number: MM3195

Related CR Release Date: April 30, 2004

Related CR Transmittal #: 159

Effective Date: June 1, 2004

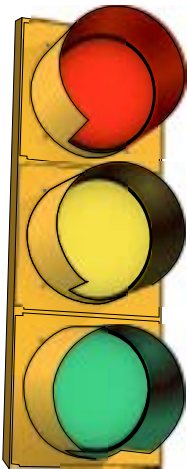
Implementation Date: June 1, 2004 (Start Date of phased implementation that should be completed on August 1, 2004.)

### *MMA - National 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) Implementation (Section 923(d) of MMA)*

#### Provider Types Affected

All providers

#### Provider Action Needed



##### **STOP – Impact to You**

Medicare carriers (including DMERCs) and fiscal intermediaries will no longer maintain their own individual **beneficiary** toll-free telephone numbers. Instead, all beneficiary calls should be directed to 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

##### **CAUTION – What You Need to Know**

Effective June 1, 2004, carriers and FIs will begin to transition to **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)** for all beneficiary questions that pertain to Medicare claims and services. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will contact each carrier/FI on an individual basis to provide the specific migration/implementation date for that contractor (phase-in is planned for June - July 2004). As calls come in to the new centralized number, questions regarding specific claims will be routed to the appropriate Medicare carrier/FI for response.

##### **GO – What You Need to Do**

Medicare carriers/FIs will publish the new beneficiary toll-free telephone number on Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs), beneficiary correspondence, Medicare Redetermination Notices (formerly, appeals letters) and, if applicable, on Medicare beneficiary websites. On or after August 1, 2004, **when you advise your patients to call Medicare with questions, direct them to 1-800-MEDICARE. However, for calls regarding eligibility status or claims status, and other provider-initiated inquiries, providers should continue to use the existing provider toll-free numbers.**

#### Disclaimer

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## Background

The change in policy, driven by the Medicare Modernization Act (MMA) of 2003 (section 923 (d)), requires all Medicare carriers/FIs to use one number—**1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)**—for all Medicare questions from beneficiaries. By providing a single call-in number, Medicare aims to improve customer telephone service by connecting callers quickly with the correct Medicare contractor for their case and question, thereby reducing the number of calls and referrals overall.

Currently, an internal CMS workgroup is developing standard operating procedures for processes and exceptions to this new policy. All procedures will be communicated to contractors as soon as final decisions are made.

## Additional Information

The official instruction issued to your carrier regarding this change may be found by going to:

[http://www.cms.hhs.gov/manuals/transmittals/comm\\_date\\_dsc.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/manuals/transmittals/comm_date_dsc.asp)

From that web page, look for CR 3195 in the CR NUM column on the right, and click on the file for that CR number.

Also, remember that 1-800-MEDICARE is for beneficiary-initiated calls. Providers calling Medicare should continue using the numbers currently in use. If you do not have that number, you may find it at:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/tollnums.asp>

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