

## NATIONAL PROVIDER IDENTIFIERS: A REMINDER

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All HIPAA-covered entities, by May 23, 2007, must obtain a National Provider Identifier (NPI) number. The NPI will be used as your identifier on standard transactions. The requirement applies to individual healthcare providers, as well as to health service organizations such as hospitals, clinics and pharmacies.

You may apply for an NPI online at <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov>. The application takes about 20 minutes to complete. Or, you may complete and mail in a paper form. If you have questions or want to obtain a paper form, call the National Plan and Provider Enumerator System (NPPES) toll-free at 1 800 465 3203. You will be issued an NPI within 15 days of application. My online application was processed, and an NPI assigned to me, in about 15 minutes.

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) providers will note that the application requests a taxonomy code. The first two digits of the code indicate the basic category of services into which the provider has been placed. Here are several codes that apply to CAM providers:

Acupuncturist	171100000X
Chiropractor	111N00000X
Homeopath	175L00000X
Massage Therapist	225A00000X
Naturopath	175F00000X

There are subsets of the code for chiropractors to indicate sub-specialties.

Once you have an NPI, you must keep NPPES informed of changes to materials submitted on your application, within 30 days of any such changes.

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David C. Kailin, Ph.D., M.P.H., L.Ac is widely regarded as the leading authority on CAM-related federal regulations. He is the author of *Quality In Complementary & Alternative Medicine* (2006, CMS Press). Dr. Kailin provides consulting services on quality improvement and regulatory issues, and for integrative medicine programs. More information is available at <http://www.convergentmedical.com>