

WellChoice Bulletin

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Important Information About WellChoice Plan Administration

AUDIENCE:

WellChoice network physicians, facilities and ancillary providers

SUBJECT:

WellChoice changes member identification (ID) numbers to protect members' privacy

EFFECTIVE DATE:

6/1/04

WELLCHOICE ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE:

WellChoice is committed to safeguarding members' privacy. To this end, we are replacing current member ID numbers — which are based on a member's social security number — with new ID numbers.

WellChoice will transition our members to the new ID numbers beginning in June 2004 and continuing through December 2005.

The new member ID number will be a three-letter prefix followed by a randomly assigned eight-digit number, beginning with the number "eight". WellChoice will maintain claims and membership history internally under both numbers. When we inform members of their new ID numbers, we will also instruct them to notify their healthcare providers of the change.

To ensure hassle-free administration during this transition, please do the following:

- Be prepared to accept and administer new ID numbers when they are received.
- When presented with the new ID card, immediately record the new ID number in your patient's record.
- Use the new ID number instead of your patient's social security number for **all** correspondence with your members and WellChoice, whether it's by phone, mail or on the Internet.
- Please submit claims under your patient's new ID number.
- Begin modifying your systems so that they can recognize the new member ID numbers and ensure that they map/link up with the patient's current SSNs.

Following these suggestions will ensure timely service and processing of claims.

During the transition period, you will continue to see both the patient's social security number and the new ID number on certain provider correspondence — including paper remittances and all provider correspondence from WellChoice. Please note that if a claim was submitted under the new ID number, the remittance (in both paper and electronic forms) will only show the new ID number.

CONTACT:

For more information, please call WellChoice Provider Services at 1-888-476-7245 Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. EST.

Please note: As part of the initial phase, and in compliance with state laws, some of our members were issued new ID cards that display suppressed ID numbers. On those new cards, the first five numerals of the member's social security number have been suppressed, meaning they have been replaced with five asterisks (e.g., *****1234). These five asterisks are followed by a four-digit number which represents the last four digits of the member's actual social security number. Those members with suppressed ID numbers on their cards will be assigned non-social security numbers in the upcoming months.

If a member presents you with an ID card that has suppressed numbers, please ask your WellChoice member patient for his/her full social security number or refer to your patient's medical record. Be sure to include the member's entire social security number in all correspondence with WellChoice.