



## **Future Updates to the Retiree Drug Subsidy (RDS) System to Accommodate the CMS Social Security Number Removal Initiative (SSNRI) (April 27, 2017)**

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) of 2015 requires that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) remove Social Security Numbers (SSNs) from all Medicare cards by April 2019. A new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) will replace the SSN-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) on new Medicare cards which will be issued to beneficiaries no earlier than April 2018.

The Social Security Number Removal Initiative (SSNRI) will require coordination between all stakeholders involved. We recognize that Retiree Drug Subsidy (RDS) Plan Sponsors and their vendors are interested in learning more about how the SSNRI will affect them. To that end, this memorandum provides general information about how SSNRI will impact RDS in order to assist Plan Sponsors and their vendors in preparing for this transition. Additional details about the system will be communicated in the future.

Please contact [CMS' RDS Center](#) if you have additional questions regarding these updates. This memorandum will be posted on the SSNRI Webpage available at <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/SSNRI/Index.html> to provide interested stakeholders with updated information regarding this initiative and how it will impact RDS.

### **General Information**

There will be a transition period where CMS will accept either the HICN or the MBI when submitting data to the agency. The transition period will begin no earlier than April 1, 2018, and run through December 31, 2019. RDS Plan Sponsors and their vendors may continue to include *either* the HICN *or* the MBI on records submitted through RDS *indefinitely*, meaning both *during and after* the transition period. RDS Plan Sponsors and their vendors should submit the MBI on records when it is available. CMS will monitor the progress of RDS Plan Sponsors and their vendors in making the transition to submitting MBIs.

### **Retiree Drug Subsidy (RDS) System Updates**

#### **File Layouts**

The RDS file layouts will be updated by repurposing the field titled "Medicare Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN)" to be the "Medicare beneficiary identifier" field. The format of this field will remain the same. These updates are planned to take place in December 2017, in advance of the start of the transition period, which will begin no earlier than April 2018. After the transition period begins, the renamed "Medicare beneficiary identifier" field may contain

*either* the HICN *or* the MBI *indefinitely*, meaning both *during and after* the transition period. Specific details regarding the forthcoming updates to each of the RDS file layouts, reason codes, lists, and reports will be detailed in a subsequent communication. In addition, an overview of the upcoming RDS SSNRI changes will be included in a CMS RDS webinar prior to implementation.

If you have any questions about the information in this document please contact [Mary.Best@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Mary.Best@cms.hhs.gov) or [Ivan.Iveljic@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Ivan.Iveljic@cms.hhs.gov).