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The Health Information Network (THIN) Overview

THIN is a network of electronic services that BCBSIL, in conjunction with the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council (MCHC), has made available to health care providers in the State of Illinois. THIN Inc. provides a single point of access to many different types of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) transactions for BCBSIL and other payers who participate in our HCSClearinghouse: Medicare Part A and B, Illinois Department of Public Aid (IDPA) via REV vendors, and for commercial payers, such as Aetna, Cigna, and United Health Care.

THIN Inc. Submitter Enrollment and Trading Partner Agreement

On December 28, 2000, the final ruling for HIPAA Privacy was issued, released to the Federal Register and published. The purpose of the privacy regulations as stated in the final rule, is to provide enhanced protections for individually identifiable health information. Under the HIPAA Privacy Rules, a covered entity may disclose Protected Health Information (PHI) to a Business Associate, and may allow Business Associates to create or receive PHI on behalf of a covered entity.

Effective April 1, 2003, health care providers, payers, billing agents, and clearinghouses who transmit and/or receive PHI in an electronic format through Health Care Service Corporation's (HCSC) clearinghouse network must complete a Business Associate Addendum with HCSC. A Business Associate Addendum allows HCSC to continue to perform Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) functions on behalf of the provider and assure that PHI will be appropriately safeguarded.

The new Submitter Enrollment and Trading Partner Agreement Packet now houses all of the documents needed to complete the requirements for the electronic process. The Business Associates Addendum, Enrollment Form, Trading Partner Agreement, THIN Fee Schedule, Report Request Form and an optional Electronic Remittance Advice Form are all included in one document.

To learn how to participate in THIN Inc., and obtain the required documentation, log on to www.bcbsil.com. Once you reach the BCBSIL homepage “click” the “Providers” button to reach the “Electronic Commerce” homepage. Or call the THIN Inc. hotline at (312) 653-7954 for a submitter enrollment package.

Upon receipt of the package you must determine what EDI transactions you want. They are detailed in the submitter enrollment package that you will receive and summarized on the following pages.
Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Transactions

Electronic Media Claims:
1. Batch
2. Online/Provider Terminal System (PTS)
3. Direct Data Entry (DDE)

- BCBSIL
  - Commercial
  - Medicare Part A
  - Medicare Part B
  - IDPA

THIN Online Functions

Electronic Payment Summary (EPS)
(Batch Only)

- BCBSIL

Electronic Reports
(Batch Only)

- BCBSIL
  - Commercial
  - Medicare Part A
  - Medicare Part B
  - IDPA

Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA)
(Batch Only)

- BCBSIL
  - Medicare Part A
  - Medicare Part B

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

- BCBSIL

- Eligibility and Benefit Information
- Claim Status Inquiry
- Provider Directory Search
- Inpatient Precertification
- Census Reports
- Online Publications
- Local Medical Review Policy
THIN Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Transactions

**THIN Online – Inquiry**

THIN Online Payer Transaction List – As of 4/1/04

All transactions are free of charge unless indicated by an asterisk (*). Fees subject to change.

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<th>Claims Status</th>
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<th>Census Report</th>
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*Premium Service, applicable fees apply. Contact Nebo Systems (630) 916-3200 for information. For information on how to get started with THIN Online log on to www.bcbsil.com. Once you reach the BCBSIL homepage “click” the “Providers” button to reach the “Electronic Commerce” homepage. Or call the EDI hotline at (312) 653-7954
THIN Inc. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Transactions (cont.)

**Electronic Media Claims (EMC)**

Virtually any claim that can be filed on paper can be submitted via EMC. The information to file electronic claims is the same as for paper claims. EMC submitters use standardized claim formats (CMS-1500 and UB-92) standard procedure codes (CPT and HCPCS) and standard diagnosis codes (ICD-9-CM). Providers can use the same EMC system to submit claims for BCBSIL, IDPA, Medicare Part A and B and Commercial claims. To get started with electronic billing log on to www.bcbsil.com. Once you reach the BCBSIL homepage “click” the “Providers” button to reach the “Electronic Commerce” homepage. Or call the EDI hotline at (312) 653-7954.

**EMC Benefits:**

- **Faster turnaround time**
  - No mail delays
  - Electronic claims travel on telephone lines and the internet

- **Reduced errors**
  - Claims are entered on our system just the way they left your office

- **Better cash flow**
  - Electronic claims are paid faster than paper claims

- **Reduced overhead**
  - Eliminate paperwork
  - Save hours of clerical time
THIN Inc. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Transactions (cont.)

EMC Batch Transmission Options

- **rEDI-link Blue**
  rEDI-link Blue is an updated version of the current EMCNET Bulletin Board System. rEDI-link Blue system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with real time editing. The real time editing system is down from 11 p.m. to 4:30 a.m. (CST). If the editing system is not available you may upload a file to rEDI-link Blue and as soon as the editing system resumes processing, files in rEDI-link Blue will be edited. Response files are available in a file format, a real-time report format and a daily file/claim detail report format. rEDI-link Blue has replaced EMCNET. Information regarding rEDI-link Blue can be obtained on the www.thinedi.com Web site, including the telecommunications guide, report guide and error messages guide. Internet File Transfer Protocol (FTP) to THIN via the internet is also available. Enrollment can be completed on above mentioned Web site.

- **Network Data Mover (NDM)**
  NDM is software that resides on your host system and on our host system at HCSC. It is used to transfer data to and from the submitter site. In order to transfer data via the NDM vehicle, you must have NDM software at your facility. You will also need a modem for the information to be transferred.

EMC On-line Transmission Options

- **Provider Terminal System (PTS)***
  Through the PTS you submit claims directly to BCBSIL through a terminal located at the site. The terminal and keyboard is leased from BCBSIL. Claims are entered one at a time at your terminal and transmitted to BCBSIL through a dedicated telephone line.

- **Terminal Emulation***
  Terminal emulation works much the same as the PTS. You supply the computer, communications software, and a modem and you are given access that allows your PC to connect with BCBSIL. Claims are entered through your PC and transmitted to BCBSIL through a dedicated telephone line.

* Both above electronic claims submissions are via Direct Data Entry (DDE)
Electronic Services

THIN Inc. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Transactions (cont.)

**Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)**

Instead of a paper check that has to be deposited, electronic providers can choose to be paid via direct deposit to their bank account. EFT is available for Blue Cross and Blue Shield claims payments. And, like other EDI capabilities such as ERA, EFT requires no manual handling and no paper-work. Payment is faster and easier, moving from the payer’s bank to the provider’s account in one smooth transaction that is paper-free, hassle-free. To find out more information about EFT log on to www.bcbsil.com. Once you reach the BCBSIL homepage “click” the “Providers” button to reach the “Electronic Commerce” homepage. Or call the EDI hotline at (312) 653-7954.

**Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA)**

A natural partner to EFT is ERA and EPS. Both are available and can be received via a variety of protocols (same as EMC Batch Transmission Options listed on page 6 of this section), that can be down loaded the day after the claim is finalized and used to verify EFT.

An Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA) explains benefit payments for Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Medicare Part A and Part B claims. An ERA shows which claims were paid and lists the amount of each payment and shows the status of other claims that were processed. This data can then be posted to your accounts electronically. ERA eliminates the need for manual posting and allows staff members to concentrate on more productive aspects of health care. Providers whose software is ERA capable can transfer an ERA to their computer. Some software offers a print option to allow you to print the remittance advice for review.

The ERA conforms to the requirements of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and is used by providers and billing services for automatic posting. Translation programming is required by the provider or the provider’s billing service in order to receive the ERA. It is generated in the ANSI X12 835 format.

Find out more information and get started with ERA log on to www.bcbsil.com. Once you reach the BCBSIL homepage “click” the “Providers” button to reach the “Electronic Commerce” homepage. Or call the EDI hotline at (312) 653-7954.
THIN Inc. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Transactions (cont.)

Electronic Payment Summary (EPS)

The connection to ERA is EPS. The EPS is an electronic print image of the Provider Claim Summary (PCS). The EPS provides the same payment information you currently receive on your paper PCS. The advantage of the EPS is that the payment information is received in your office the day after the claim has been finalized.

The EPS may be accessed through your mainframe system or your PC (via a modem and communication software). No special programming is required to receive the EPS. The EPS is already in an easy-to-read format, and can be received via a variety of protocols.

If you currently receive the Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA), we encourage you to also use the EPS as an added tool when reconciling your Blue Cross Blue Shield payments. Both the EPS and the ERA provide payment information. The EPS is a printed image of the PCS that is generated in a text format. It cannot be used for automatic posting and is only available in conjunction with the ERA.

rEDI-Link Blue Response Reports

For Batch claims submission you may receive nine different types of confirmation reports:

- A Daily Confirmation Report of file and batch transmissions as well as real-time claim detail reject information.
- A Daily Summary Report of electronic claim activity at the file level. (Tuesday through Saturday)
- A Detail List Report of claim activity by provider or Tax ID number (Tuesday through Saturday)
- A Daily Summary of Sender/Payer responses by submitter and provider number. Has the DCN# assigned by BCBSIL for accepted claims.
- A Monthly Summary of all electronic claim activity from the previous month.
- A Weekly Reconciliation Report for institutional providers who are on the UPP system and receive EFT.
- A report created by AdminaStar Federal, Inc. It list claims submitted by batch and identifies the status of each claim.
- A report created by WPS and is a batch summary control listing of WPS accepted/deleted claims.
- A functional acknowledgement. The data segments of this standard are used to report the results of the syntactical analysis of the functional groups of the ANSI 837 transaction set. Acceptance and rejection and the number of included transaction sets will be acknowledged by functional groups.
THIN Inc. Subscription Service and Enrollment

THIN is a subscription service; enrollment is tailored to each provider’s specific practice or facility. Subscription to THIN is inexpensive. There is no monthly subscription fee for the Basic package, which allows submission of electronic Commercial Payer and Blue Cross and Blue Shield claims. New fee levels currently available allow for no monthly fees to be charged for submitters who send their government lines of business (Medicaid/IDPA, Medicare A, Medicare B) through THIN as long as they are also submitting all of their Blue Cross, Blue Shield, and Commercial claims simultaneously. For submitters who do not send all lines of business through THIN, regular fees still apply for the submission of government lines of business.

For information, questions and enrollment log on to www.bcbsil.com. Once you reach the BCBSIL homepage “click” the “Providers” button to reach the “Electronic Commerce” homepage. Or call the EDI hotline at (312) 653-7954. The THIN dedicated staff will assist you in finding the right mix of services and benefits for your practice or facility.