

# THE PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO THE DATA BANKS

## A Road Map for Physicians, Dentists, and Other Health Care Practitioners



### ABOUT THE DATA BANKS

The National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) are information clearinghouses created by Congress to improve health care quality and reduce health care fraud and abuse in the U.S. The NPDB receives and discloses information related to the professional competence and conduct of physicians, dentists and, in some cases, other health care practitioners. The HIPDB receives and discloses information related to final adverse actions taken against health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers. Collectively, the NPDB and HIPDB are referred to as "the Data Banks."



### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### Q: What Kind of Information Does Each Data Bank Collect?

A: The NPDB collects information on medical malpractice payments, Medicare/Medicaid exclusions, and adverse actions, including licensure, clinical privileges, and professional society membership actions. The HIPDB collects information on licensure and certification actions, exclusions from Federal and State health care programs, health care-related criminal convictions and civil judgments, and other adjudicated actions as specified in regulation.

#### Q: Can I Send My Self-Query Application via Fax or Expedited Mail Service?

A: The Data Banks cannot accept self-queries via fax. However, submitting your self-query using an expedited mail service may save transit time. Consult the Web site for the appropriate address when using these services. Please do **not** enclose prepaid or self-addressed stamped envelopes with your formatted self-query application.

#### Q: When Will I Receive My Self-Query Response?

A: Once the Data Banks have received the properly signed and notarized self-query application, the self-query will be processed within two business days. Under certain circumstances, additional processing may be required. When the self-query response is available, the Data Banks will send an e-mail notifying the self-querier that the response is available for viewing and printing electronically.

#### Q: Will the Data Banks Send My Self-Query Results to a State Board?

A: Federal law prohibits the Data Banks from sending query responses to a third party, such as a State board. In most cases, self-query responses will only be mailed if the practitioner requests one or more paper copies. You may give copies of your self-query response to anyone you choose.



Sources for Graphics:

Microsoft Corporation Design Gallery (<http://dgl.microsoft.com>)

European Driving Regulations (<http://www.eurodriveregs.co.uk>)

Manual of Traffic Signs by Richard C. Moeur (<http://members.aol.com/rcmoeur>)



### STEPS TO SUBMIT A SELF-QUERY

**Step 1:** To initiate a self-query, go to [www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov](http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov).

**Step 2:** Choose to Perform a Self-Query and click the appropriate self-query option (Individual, Organization, or Check Status).

**Step 3:** Acknowledge the Rules of Behavior and click **Continue**.

**Step 4:** Fill in the blanks on the *Self-Query Input* screen with the appropriate information. If you're not sure what to provide, refer to the **Help** buttons.

**Step 5:** Click Continue on the *Self-Query Input* screen.

**Step 6:** On the *Output Options* screen, create and confirm a "Self-Query Service Password," and then click **Continue**.

**Step 7:** Specify "E-mail Notification" and "Response Preference," and then click **Continue**.

**Step 8:** Specify your response preference, indicating whether or not you want a mailed copy of your self-query response, and, if so, how many additional mailed copies you require. Click **Continue**. **Note:** One mailed copy is included in the self-query processing fee. Each additional paper copy of your self-query response will be assessed a fee by each Data Bank under which the self-query is processed. Each additional copy will be mailed in a separate envelope. Please do **not** enclose prepaid or self-addressed stamped envelopes with your formatted self-query application.

**Step 9:** On the *Payment Information* screen, enter your credit card information (VISA, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express) and click **Continue**.

**Step 10:** Confirm the information carefully on the *Final Steps* screen and click **Continue**.

**Step 11:** A formatted copy of the self-query is generated immediately. You must print the formatted copy, sign and date it in the presence of a notary public, and mail it to the address specified on the application. A self-query without proper notarization cannot be processed. Notarization of your application ensures your privacy and the confidentiality of Data Bank information. You will receive an e-mail alerting you when your self-query response is available for on-line viewing. In addition to the electronic response, you will receive a paper copy (or copies), if you have elected to do so.

**If you do not have Internet access or the self-query function is not supported by your browser, contact the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center for assistance. (See "Contacting the Data Banks" on the reverse side of this brochure.)**

The Data Banks are used to inform health care organizations -- such as hospitals, health plans, and health care regulatory entities (e.g., State licensing boards) -- that an in-depth review of a practitioner's past actions may be prudent. Organizations use Data Bank information along with data from other sources when considering a practitioner for clinical privileges, employment, affiliation, or licensure, or reviewing a practitioner's records. To request information from, or "query," the Data Banks, organizations must be legally authorized to do so and registered with the Data Banks. The general public may not query the Data Banks. Information is provided by organizations required by law to report to the Data Banks. These organizations are known as "reporting entities."



### FINDING OUT ABOUT A REPORT

Whenever a report is submitted or modified, the Data Banks send a *Notification of a Report in the Data Bank(s)*, along with a copy of the report, to the practitioner's address as provided by the reporting entity. Reported practitioners are permitted to add a statement to the report or dispute the report. At any time, practitioners are also entitled to query the Data Banks through the Internet to determine if they are the subject of any report(s). This process is called a "self-query" and is described on the back of this brochure.

### WHY SELF-QUERY THE DATA BANKS?

You might wish to self-query simply to find out if you are the subject of a report. Or, you might want to self-query because a licensing, credentialing, or insurance entity may require a copy of your self-query response before you participate in its program. Any arrangement between you and one of these entities is voluntary. You may share your self-query response with whomever you choose. Detailed instructions on how to self-query are provided on the back of this brochure.



### ENSURING ACCURACY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Reporting entities are responsible for the factual accuracy of the information they report. If you find inaccurate information in a report submitted about you, including an outdated mailing address, contact the reporting entity to request that it correct the report. The Data Banks cannot modify information submitted in reports; however, if notified, the NPDB-HIPDB can maintain your current mailing address, even if your address as specified in a report is inaccurate. Access the Report Response Service located at [www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov](http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov) to notify the Data Banks of an address change.

Simply submitting a self-query to the Data Banks with updated address information will not change your address in the Data Banks' records.



### CORRECTING REPORT INFORMATION

If a reporting entity declines to correct a report you believe is wrong or does not void a report you feel should not have been submitted, you may initiate a dispute, add a statement to the report, or do both. You may not dispute the merits of a medical malpractice claim, or the appropriateness of, or basis for, an adverse action. If you do not have the relevant *Notification of a Report in the Data Bank(s)*, you will need to self-query to obtain the Data Bank Control Number (DCN) for the report in question.

### ADDING A STATEMENT

If you wish to add a statement to a report, access the Report Response Service at [www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov](http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov). To ensure security, each *Notification of a Report in the Data Bank(s)* contains a unique password for access to the Report Response Service. You must have this password and the DCN for the report to add your statement. If you do not have these numbers available, contact the Data Banks' Customer Service Center using the information listed on the right. When your statement is processed, it is sent to all queriers who received a copy of your report in the last 3 years and is included with your report when it is released to future queriers. You may add a statement to a report at any time.

### DISPUTING A REPORT

If you wish to dispute a report, access the Report Response Service at [www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov](http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov). You must have a password and the report's DCN as described above. When your dispute is processed, it is sent to all queriers who received a copy of your report in the last 3 years and is included with your report when it is released to future queriers.



### SECRETARIAL REVIEW PROCESS

If a reporting entity declines to change the disputed report, you may request that the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services review the matter by following the procedures outlined at [www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov](http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov). You must allow the reporting entity 30 days to void or change the report before requesting Secretarial Review. The Secretary does not review the merits of a medical malpractice claim or the appropriateness of, or basis for, an adverse action. The Secretary can review only whether a report is legally required or accurately describes the reported payment or action. When filing a request for Secretarial Review, you must submit all pertinent documentation supporting your claim.

### CONTACTING THE DATA BANKS

For additional information, visit the NPDB-HIPDB Web site at [www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov](http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov). If you need assistance, contact the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center at:

**NPDB-HIPDB**  
P.O. Box 10832  
Chantilly, VA 20153-0832



**Phone: 1-800-767-6732**  
**Outside the U.S.: 1-703-802-9380**  
**TDD: 1-703-802-9395**  
**E-mail: [help@npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov](mailto:help@npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov)**

Information specialists are available on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (5:30 p.m. on Fridays) Eastern Time. The NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center is closed on all Federal holidays.