



NPDB-HIPDB



DATA BANK NEWS



National Practitioner Data Bank—Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

APRIL 2005

How to Receive Accurate Query Responses

Providing complete and valid subject query data is the key to receiving an accurate query response from the Data Banks. When the Data Banks receive a query, subject information in the query is compared with reports in the NPDB-HIPDB according to a group of matching criteria. The Data Banks compare various data elements to protect subject privacy and ensure appropriate reports are disclosed concerning a health care practitioner, provider, or supplier. Figure 1 (on page 2) lists the mandatory and optional querying elements for individual and organization query subjects.

empty if the querier can provide other fields in their place. For example, for individual subjects, the querier must enter the subject's Social Security Number (SSN); however, if the SSN is unknown, the querier must enter either (1) the Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) or (2) the Professional School, Year of Graduation, State of License, and License Number.

Although there are minimum query input requirements, the querier should enter as much identifying data as possible to ensure an accurate match to reports stored in the NPDB-HIPDB database. For instance, because Federal regulations do not require reporters to enter an

As this figure illustrates, the Data Banks allow certain fields to be left

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SSN on malpractice payment reports, entering Professional School, Year of Graduation, etc., on queries greatly enhances the likelihood of a match.

See How to Receive Accurate Query Responses on page 2

QRXS Expands to Accept All Types of Reports

As promised in the January 2005 issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*, the Querying and Reporting Extensible Markup Language (XML) Service (QRXS) will expand in July 2005 to accept Medical Malpractice Payment Reports and Judgment or Conviction Reports. As of February 2005, the Data Banks accepted the submission of Adverse Action Reports. On July 11, 2005, the QRXS will extend its capabilities to include all other report types. **Note:** Querying is scheduled as a future enhancement to the QRXS. For additional information, stay tuned to upcoming issues of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*.

The QRXS is an electronic service similar to the Interface Control Document (ICD) Transfer Program (ITP) and is used by reporters who wish to interface their data processing system directly with the Data Banks to submit reports and receive responses. Users that do not wish to use the QRXS to submit reports will still be able to use the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) and the ITP for querying and reporting to the Data Banks. There are several benefits to using the QRXS as opposed to using the ITP and the IQRS. QRXS offers the following advantages:

- QRXS uses XML data format, which is an industry standard for electronic data exchange.

See QRXS Expands to Accept All Types of Reports on page 3

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REQUIRED AND "IF KNOWN" DATA ELEMENTS FOR MATCHING SUBJECTS IN QUERIES

DATA FIELD	QUERIES ON INDIVIDUALS	QUERIES ON ORGANIZATIONS
Last Name	Required.	N/A
First Name	Required.	N/A
Organization Name	If Known.	Required.
Social Security Number (SSN)	Required if one of the following is not specified: A) ITIN or B) Name of Professional School, Year of Graduation, State of License and License Number; Otherwise, If Known.	Required if one of the following is not specified: A) ITIN, B) FEIN, or C) State of License and License Number; Otherwise, If Known.
Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)	Required if one of the following is not specified: A) SSN or B) Name of Professional School, Year of Graduation, State of License and License Number; Otherwise, If Known.	Required if one of the following is not specified: A) SSN, B) FEIN, or C) State of License and License Number; Otherwise, If Known.
Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)	If Known (provided if individual also maintains an FEIN).	Required if one of the following is not specified: A) SSN, B) ITIN, or C) State of License and License Number; Otherwise, If Known.
State of License and License Number	Required if one of the following is not specified: A) SSN or B) ITIN; Otherwise, If Known; "No License" May Be Used.	Required if one of the following is not specified: A) FEIN, B) SSN, or C) ITIN; Otherwise, If Known. "No License" May Be Used.
Occupation/Field of Licensure	Required.	Required.
Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Number	If Known.	If Known.
Unique Physician Identification Number (UPIN)	If Known.	If Known.
National Provider Identifier (NPI)	If Known.	If Known.
Gender	Required (but "Unknown" allowed).	N/A
Professional School and Year of Graduation	Required if one of the following is not specified: A) SSN or B) ITIN; Otherwise, If Known.	N/A
Date of Birth	Required.	N/A
Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA) Number	N/A	If Known.
Medicare Provider/Supplier Number	N/A	If Known.
Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Number	N/A	If Known.
Organization Type	N/A	Required.

Dark shaded areas indicate that the data element is not applicable for matching for that type of query.

Figure 1. The mandatory and optional querying elements for individual and organization query subjects are illustrated above. ¶

Submit Precise Professional School Information in Reports

Reporters: The Data Banks rely on you to provide high-quality report information. When entering the Professional School Attended field information for the subject of a report, be sure to include enough information to distinguish the school from others with similar names. Also, avoid abbreviations that may be misinterpreted. Always include the school city and state or country in the Professional School Attended field as well as the school name.

Consider a few examples of school names that are either inadequate or acceptable: "SUNY" is inadequate because there are several State University of New York (SUNY) medical schools. "SUNY Buffalo, New York" would be acceptable. "OSU" is inadequate; is it Ohio State University or Oklahoma State University? "OSU Tulsa, Oklahoma" would be acceptable. Is "University of NE" the "University of Nebraska" or the "University of New England"? "U of New England, Biddeford, Maine" would be acceptable.

Entering the city and state or country is crucial even when providing the full school name in the Professional School Attended field, because some schools in different countries have exactly the same names. Both Canada and Northern Ireland have a "Queen's University." Does "St. Louis University" refer to the school located in St Louis, Missouri or the one in Baguio City, Philippines?

Please enter professional school names accurately and completely.

The reporter who entered "LSU College of Medical Knowledge" probably meant "Louisiana State University," but was it the LSU school in New Orleans or the one in Shreveport? We'll never know!

If the report subject did not graduate (but completed a certificate program), provide the school name in the Professional School Attended field and the last year of attendance. If the subject did not attend a school, provide the name of the certificate program and the year that it was completed. In the event that the subject neither attended a school nor completed a certificate program, enter "None" in the Professional School Attended field and enter the year that the subject was authorized by the state to provide health care services in the Year of Graduation field.

Note: The above information must be reported for Medical Malpractice Payment Reports, Clinical Privileges, Professional Society, and State and Federal Licensure actions taken against health care practitioners. This information must be reported, if known, for Exclusion and Debarment and Government Administrative actions taken against health care practitioners. These fields are not available for Judgment or Conviction Reports (JOCR), nor for any report in which the subject is not a health care practitioner. **Also note that the Professional School Attended field is limited to 40 characters and spaces.** ¶

QRXS Expands to Accept All Types of Reports from page 1

- QRXS client program includes an Application Programming Interface (API), integrating QRXS transactions into existing software systems.
- The Data Banks-defined XML schema and third-party XML validating software ensures that QRXS report submission files are formatted correctly before submission.
- QRXS provides a real-time rejection response containing a reason for the rejection.
- QRXS supports clients that use proxy servers.

For more information, be sure to view the QRXS web page at www.npdb-hipdb.com/qrxs.html. This web page provides specification documents for you to use to implement these new features. ¶

Over 500,000 Reports!

The National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) together now contain over a half million reports! The 500,000th report was a HIPDB report processed on December 27, 2004. This report concerned a license surrendered by a Texas nurse who was unable to practice safely. ¶

Security Enhancements Coming this Month

Beginning April 18, 2005, the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) will implement new requirements to enhance the IQRS system's security with regard to password procedures. These enhancements will reduce the risk of unauthorized access to user accounts.

IQRS User Passwords

Previously, users were required to change their IQRS password every 180 days and one grace login was valid indefinitely. With the new password procedures, users will be required to change their passwords every 90 days. The new grace login period is limited to 30 days after the password expires. See Figure 2 for the password policies for IQRS users.

New Entity Registration Passwords

New entities that register with the Data Banks will receive

registration information via U.S. mail providing them with a Data Bank Identification Number (DBID), a User ID, and an entity password.

According to the new April 2005 policy, a newly registered entity is required to log in to the IQRS and change the password within 30 calendar days of the registration information mailing date. After the first IQRS login, the entity is required to create a new password (which will be valid for 90 days). Previously, the new entity had 180 days to use the provided entity password and would not be required to change the password for 180 days.

If an entity does not log in to the IQRS within 30 days of the registration information mailing date, the registration password will expire and the user will not have a grace login.

Resetting IQRS Passwords

When a user forgets his or her password, or is locked out of the IQRS, the entity's administrator is responsible for providing a new system-generated temporary password to the user.

To ensure that the current administrator is correctly identified in the Data Banks, he or she must log in to the IQRS

IQRS USER PASSWORDS: NEW APRIL 2005 POLICIES

POLICY	NEW APRIL 2005 POLICY
Password Expiration	Must Change Password Every 90 Calendar Days
Grace Login Period After Password Expires	One Grace Login is Valid Within 30 Calendar Days of Password Expiration

Figure 2. The new April 2005 policies regarding IQRS passwords are outlined above.

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Helpful Hints From

SUBMIT ALL SELF-QUERIES VIA THE NPDB-HIPDB WEB SITE

All self-queries are initiated on-line through the NPDB-HIPDB web site, located at www.npdb-hipdb.com. Once a notarized self-query application is received, the Data Banks process it within two business days and return a response to the subject by first-class U.S. mail. Self-query responses can be sent only to the subject of the self-query. If you do not have access to the internet, you may call the Customer Service Center (1-800-767-6732) and they will be happy to assist you with initiating your self-query.

REMEMBER TO SAVE INFORMATION ON THE USER ACCOUNT INFORMATION SCREEN!

IQRS users should save their Name, Title, and Telephone Number on the *User Account Information* screen, so that the correct information will automatically populate the Certification section when submitting queries and reports.

SCROLL THROUGH ALL QUERY RESPONSES ON THE QUERY STATUS SCREEN

When retrieving a query response on the *Query Status* screen in the IQRS, you may find that responses do not appear in the exact order in which they were submitted. Be sure to scroll through all on-screen responses.

30-DAY VIEWING PERIOD FOR IQRS QUERY RESPONSES

In most cases, IQRS query responses are available within four to six hours of submission for 30 days. Once the 30-day period expires, query responses will no longer be available for viewing in the IQRS. If you are unable to view a query response immediately, you may print out a hard copy or save the query response file to your computer's hard drive for later use.

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and update the administrator's user account by entering the administrator's Name, Title, and Telephone Number in the appropriate fields on the *User Account Information* screen. If the entity's administrator forgets his or her password, or is locked out of the IQRS, the administrator must call the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center (1-800-767-6732) to receive a system-generated temporary password. If the administrator's name is not maintained in the administrator's IQRS user account, the company's certifying official will be required to submit a signed, faxed request for the change on company letterhead. The Customer Service Center will

respond by immediately changing the old administrator password and contacting the new administrator with a system-generated temporary password and instructions for updating the administrator's user account.

Beginning in April 2005, these temporary passwords (user and administrator) will only be valid for three calendar days. The user/administrator will be prompted to change his or her password immediately; and no grace login period will be permitted. See Figure 3 to view the system-generated temporary password policies for IQRS users and administrators.

Password Restrictions

In addition to the new password policies, the Data Banks will also prohibit the use of common or easily guessed passwords by applying the following password restrictions:

- Passwords may not contain a word found in the dictionary.
- Passwords may not be a common Data Bank word (e.g., NPDB, IQRS).
- Passwords may not be the same as the User ID.
- Passwords may not be a simplistic or systematic sequence (e.g., abcd1234).

SYSTEM-GENERATED TEMPORARY IQRS PASSWORDS: NEW APRIL 2005 POLICIES

POLICY	NEW APRIL 2005 POLICY
Password Expiration	System-Generated Temporary Password Valid for 3 Calendar Days
Grace Login Period After Password Expires	No Grace Login After System-Generated Temporary Password Expires

Figure 3. The new April 2005 policies regarding resetting IQRS passwords are specified above.

IQRS security and the confidentiality of practitioner reports continue to be among the Data Bank's highest priorities. These new security enhancements improve password integrity and security for the system. For additional information on the importance of IQRS security, see the article entitled "Security Hints from the Data Banks" on page 6 of this newsletter. ¶

The Data Banks

TWO MORE ADVERSE CLASSIFICATION CODES AVAILABLE FOR REVISION TO ACTION REPORTS

As of February 2005, reporters may choose two new adverse action classification codes when submitting revision to action reports. (These codes were formerly available only for initial and correction reports.) The new codes are: Voluntary Surrender of License (code 1145) for Federal or State Licensure reports and Voluntary Surrender of Clinical Privilege(s) (code 1635) for Clinical Privileges reports.

KEEP EFT ACCOUNTS UP-TO-DATE!

If you use Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) as your method of payment for queries, please remember to modify EFT information through the IQRS whenever your account information changes. For example, if your checking account or routing number changes, it must be updated to avoid rejections for inaccurate payment information. To update EFT account information, perform the following steps:

- Log in to the IQRS, available at www.npdb-hipdb.com.
- Click **Administrator Options**.
- On the *Administrator Options* screen, click **Authorize EFT**.
- Print and sign the formatted document, attach a voided check or a letter on your bank's letterhead confirming the account information and its intended use. Mail these items to the NPDB-HIPDB, at P.O. Box 10832, Chantilly, VA 20153-0832, for processing. Be sure to include all necessary information. Missing documentation will delay processing your EFT information.
- The Data Banks will notify you through the IQRS that your account has been updated. When you log in to the IQRS, you will receive Data Bank Correspondence to confirm your account changes. Please review this information for accuracy. ¶

Security Hints from the Data Banks

Phishing is the act of sending an e-mail or other communication to a user claiming to be a legitimate business in an attempt to obtain a user's private information. The e-mail directs the user to visit a web site where he or she is asked to update personal information, such as password, credit card, social security, and bank account numbers. The web site, however, is fraudulent and is established only to take the user's information.

Here are five simple ways to avoid being "phished":

1. Do not open e-mail attachments from anyone unless you know the sender and you are expecting the attachment.
2. Do not click on links in e-mails unless you can guarantee the e-mail came from someone who is legitimate. Even if the e-mail appears to be legitimate (from your bank, a retail store where you shop, etc.), it is best to close the e-mail and then access the particular web site directly in order to find the information that was advertised in the e-mail. This way you know the source is

legitimate. If you are still unsure, you can always contact the Customer Service department for the business in question and inquire about the e-mail information you received.

3. Remember that real companies almost never send e-mails asking you to submit personal data.
4. Do not disclose private information unless you initiate the request to do so.
5. Please be sure to safeguard your confidential/personal identifying information (Social Security Number, Personal Identification Number, credit card number, etc.) when using the Internet.

The Data Banks will never send an e-mail requesting your identifying information.

When using the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS), and when inputting information on any credit card-related screens, if you encounter an unfamiliar screen requesting personal information, do not provide the information. Please note that the Data Banks

will never request a Personal Identification Number (PIN) code.

If you question whether an IQRS web screen is legitimate, we suggest that you take the following four steps:

1. Do not complete the information on the screen in question. Print the screen.
2. Contact your Information Technology (IT) department. Explain the situation and provide them with a copy of the screen printout (if possible). Have your IT department investigate the situation.
3. Shut down your computer.
4. Please call the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732.

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

Dear Data Banks...

This column answers questions you may have about Data Bank policy and procedures. If you have a question about how the Data Banks work, please write to Dear Data Banks at P.O. Box 10832, Chantilly, VA 20153-0832 or e-mail your question to Dear Data Banks at npdb-hipdb@sra.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Question: I am my entity's administrator and, when I try to log in to the IQRS, I receive a message that my account is locked out. If I call the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732, can I receive a password to regain access to the IQRS?

Answer: If your administrator information (the name of your entity's administrator) is currently saved in your entity's IQRS user account, then the Customer Service Center will be able to provide you with a temporary password for IQRS access. After you log in using the temporary password, you will be required to change the temporary password to a new password within three days.

If your entity administrator information is not saved in your entity's IQRS user account, or if the information is out-of-date, then the Customer Service Center cannot provide you with a temporary password for IQRS access. Your entity's certifying official must fax a signed request on company letterhead to the Data Banks stating that you are the entity's administrator and request that a temporary password be provided. After receiving the faxed request, the Customer Service Center can provide you with a temporary password for IQRS access. Due to heightened security measures, the Data Banks must restrict password information to the entity's certifying official and the entity's administrator (the person named as the entity's administrator in the IQRS user account).

Entities must ensure that their saved user account information is current. To update your entity's user account information, access the *User Account Information* screen. To do so, the entity administrator logs in to the IQRS, clicks **Administrator Options** on the *Registration Confirmation* screen, and clicks **Maintain User Accounts**. To input information for a new entity administrator, highlight the administrator User ID and click **Edit** on the *Maintain User Account* screen. On the *User Account Information* screen, be sure to include the Name and Title of the administrator, and then click **Save**. This will update the information in your IQRS user account. If your entity administrator information changes, be sure to update the new information on the *User Account Information* screen to enable the Data Banks to assist you immediately should you require assistance with your password.

Question: How do I update my entity's certifying official information?

Answer: Administrators may update their certifying official (and other entity profile information) through the IQRS. To update profile information when personnel changes occur, log into the IQRS, click **Administrator Options** on the *Registration Confirmation* screen, and then click **Update Registration Profile**. Complete the fields that require a change and click **Save**. Some fields may require that the form be printed, signed, and mailed to the NPDB-HIPDB at P.O. Box 10832, Chantilly, VA 20153-0832. The IQRS will alert you when this is required. For more information, see the *Fact Sheet on Updating Profile Information Through the IQRS*, available on-line at www.npdb-hipdb.com/factsheet.html.

Question: When importing subjects into my IQRS subject database, what is the advantage of using Extensible Markup Language (XML) format over Fixed-Width format?

Answer: The XML import format offers several advantages over the fixed-width format. XML format enables users to add, update, and delete both individual and organization subjects, whereas the fixed-width format only allows users to add individual subjects to their IQRS subject database. XML import format also provides a Subject ID# data element for the entity's personal use. This field refers to an optional identifying number chosen by the entity to help track subjects during the import process.

Question: Do HIPDB-mandated reporters who also report to the NPDB have to report the same action separately to the two Data Banks?

Answer: The HIPDB is implemented in a manner that avoids the duplication of the reporting requirements established for the NPDB. Therefore, entities that must report actions to both the NPDB and HIPDB will submit the report once and the system will automatically route the report to the appropriate Data Bank(s). However, health plans may have to submit one report to the NPDB and a separate report to the HIPDB. If two separate but related actions are taken, then a report for each action must be filed. Consider the following scenario: A health plan takes a formal or official contract termination that meets the definition of an "other adjudicated action." The health plan also takes a professional review action against the practitioner's privileges or membership based on the same facts. The two actions must be reported separately: the contract termination to the HIPDB as a "health plan action" and the privilege or membership action to the NPDB as a "clinical privilege action." ¶

On the Horizon

ATTENTION ITP USERS: ENHANCED FILE FORMATS COMING IN SEPTEMBER

Updates to the Interface Control Document (ICD) Transfer Program (ITP) submission and response file formats are scheduled for implementation in September 2005. Please look for further information in upcoming issues of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*.

NPDB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETS IN MAY

The next NPDB Executive Committee meeting will occur on May 12, 2005, at the Sheraton Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia. The July issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News* will report on the May meeting accomplishments.

POLICY FORUM MEETS IN JUNE

The Data Banks will conduct a policy forum to focus on medical malpractice payment reporting on June 16, 2005, in Fairfax, Virginia. If you are interested in attending, please contact the Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732. Please note that attendance for this forum is limited. †

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