



NPDB-HIPDB DATA BANK NEWS



National Practitioner Data Bank—Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

APRIL 2008

PDS Approaching 1-Year Anniversary!

The Proactive Disclosure Service Prototype (PDS) will celebrate its 1-year anniversary on May 1, 2008. PDS subscribers continue to praise the service as a wonderfully effective tool for use in their continuous monitoring process. These entities receive notification, within 24 hours, of the Data Banks receipt of a report on their enrolled practitioners. Currently, there are over 300 PDS subscribers, with more than 90,000 practitioners enrolled in the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and more than 11,000 practitioners in the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB). At this time in the prototype phase, subscribers have expressed that they are pleased with all aspects of the service—from enrollment to report disclosure notifications.

PDS Renewal

As the 1-year anniversary approaches, many entities will begin to renew

their practitioner enrollments in the PDS. Each subscriber will receive an e-mail notification to remind them to renew their practitioner enrollments 60 days before the enrollments expire. Subscribers may renew enrollments up to 30 days before the particular expiration date. Timely enrollment renewals will prevent a lapse in service and eliminate the need to submit a traditional query.

The Future of PDS

Presently, PDS appears to be a success. Subscribers have stated that it is an excellent tool to support their continuous monitoring processes as well as an excellent alternative querying option that complies with health care accreditation requirements. Entities that are uncertain about the future of PDS can be assured that the Data Banks are pleased with the system's performance even though there are 6 months remaining in the evaluation period.

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Consequently, entities that have been hesitant about enrolling can, now, confidently subscribe and enroll their practitioners.

Current PDS subscribers include: Hospitals, Managed Care Organizations, Community Mental Health Centers, Community Health

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Electronic Report Change Notifications

Entities can now receive electronic notifications of report changes, such as report corrections and notices of report disputes, via e-mail. The Data Banks alert users to view and download Report Change Notifications from the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS), and the Querying and Reporting XML Service (QRXS). All users must have a valid e-mail address on file to receive the electronic notifications. Also, on the *Notification Preference* screen, the Entity Data Bank Administrator can select the checkbox to opt out of receiving the paper version of the change reports. ❖

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Centers, Ambulatory Surgery Centers, Physicians Health Organizations (PHOs), Skilled Nursing Facilities, and Other Health Care Service Providers. Depending on whether the entity subscribed to the NPDB, HIPDB, or both, the practitioners are continuously monitored for reports of Adverse Actions, State Licensure Actions, Medical Malpractice Payments, and Judgment or Convictions 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

PDS participation from all registered entities is still encouraged. The enrollment process is quick and straightforward. To enroll practitioners, simply complete the PDS application located at www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov/pubs/PDS_Invitation_Information.pdf. Return the completed application to the Data Banks through one of the following methods:

- Fax: 703-802-4109
- E-mail: npdb-hipdb@sra.com
- Mailing address:
NPDB-HIPDB
Attn: PDS Participation
P.O. Box 10832
Chantilly, VA 20153-0832

Once your practitioners are enrolled, you do not have to submit an additional query on them as long as they remain enrolled in the PDS. The service meets the legal requirement for querying and meets accreditation standards. The PDS automatically queries on enrolled practitioners and alerts the subscriber of all new reports on those enrolled practitioners. The subscriber will receive an e-mail notification every time a new report disclosure is available.

PDS Subscriber Suggestions Lead to System Improvement

PDS subscriber suggestions are important in the shaping of the service. Many of the NPDB-HIPDB

system enhancements are based on user feedback. Over the past several months of PDS operations, the Data Banks have implemented several suggestions and plan to implement additional enhancements in the fall. Subscriber suggestions are always welcomed and easily submitted by contacting the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732.

Recent and Future Improvements

Outlined below is a listing of recently implemented and planned PDS system enhancements.

Recent enhancements:

- The option to keep or delete a subject from the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) subject database when enrolling them into the PDS.
- The ability to update PDS enrollment information on a practitioner by selecting the subject from your IQRS subject database.

Planned enhancements for fall 2008:

- Provide the option to receive a monthly e-mail summary of your PDS report disclosures.
- Display unique subject ID (provided by user) in the header of each page.
- Allow users to schedule an enrollment cancellation on a future date.
- Allow users to cancel multiple enrollments at once (batch cancellations).
- Add a "search by cancellation date" feature.

- Provide option for *ad hoc* enrollment confirmations to optionally include matching reports in Portable Document Format (PDF).

PDS Enrollment Fees

The annual enrollment fee for each Data Bank is \$3.25. The fee covers the cost of enrolling one practitioner in one Data Bank for 1 year. When an entity (subscriber) enrolls a practitioner in the PDS, the entity receives a copy of all active reports that the Data Bank contains on that practitioner. For a typical entity, the PDS costs no more than traditional queries and will save on staff time. The fee is based on the average number of queries performed by hospitals or other health care entities over a 2- or 3-year cycle.

The PDS saves you money and time because PDS automatically provides an alert of new reports on enrolled practitioners, which frees your staff to complete other tasks. The PDS notifies you via e-mail, within 24 hours, whenever new information is received about one of your enrolled practitioners, i.e., the PDS will notify you of new, corrected, and revised reports as well as voids, subjects statements, notification of dispute status, and elevations to secretarial review on all reports. PDS also saves you time since you do not need to perform a traditional Data Bank query as long as the practitioner is enrolled in PDS.

Subscribe Today!

The PDS is open and available! Join the other 300+ entities currently benefiting from the PDS. As a PDS subscriber, not only will you receive continuous querying on enrolled practitioners, but you will no longer have to submit traditional queries—a great time-saving feature! Just complete and return the PDS participation application located at www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov/pubs/PDS_Invitation.pdf. Enroll your practitioners today! ❖

Data Bank Outreach and Education Activities

The Practitioner Data Banks Branch (PDBB) continues its outreach and education activities. Our goal is sharing information with Data Bank users and gathering and responding to user concerns. The following is a list of upcoming meetings that Data Bank staff will attend.

Spring Conference of the Iowa Association Medical Staff Services (IAMSS) Conference (Ames, IA, April 4). Staff will speak about the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and the Proactive Disclosure Service Prototype (PDS).

New Jersey State Association Medical Staff Services Meeting (NJAMSS) Conference (Atlantic City, NJ, April 23 – 24). Staff will provide information about the NPDB, Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB), and the PDS.

New York State Association Medical Staff Services (NYSAMSS) Conference (Albany, NY, April 24 – 25). Staff will speak about the NPDB and HIPDB operations and innovations.

Pennsylvania State Association Medical Staff Services (PAMSS) Conference (Erie, PA, April 30 – May 2). Staff will provide information on the NPDB, HIPDB, the PDS, and Section 1921.

Washington-Oregon Joint Association Medical Staff Services Conference (Vancouver, WA, May 13 – 16). Staff will speak about the NPDB and HIPDB innovations and operations.

Florida Association Medical Staff Services (FAMSS) Educational Conference (Cocoa Beach, FL, May 14 – 17). Staff will speak about the NPDB and the PDS.

Kansas Association Medical Staff Services (KSAMSS) Conference (Wichita, KS, May 15 – 16). Staff will speak about the NPDB and the PDS.

American Health Lawyers Association (AHLA) Annual Meeting (San Francisco, CA, June 29 – July 3). Staff will speak about the NPDB and the PDS. ❖

Data Bank Newsletter—Electronic Format

In an effort to become less paper-oriented, the Data Bank newsletter is going green by implementing electronic distribution to users who have an e-mail address stored in the Data Banks. The newsletter will be delivered directly to you via e-mail in Portable Document Format (PDF). The paper version of the Data Bank newsletter will continue to be mailed to you via U.S. Postal Service unless you contact the Data Banks and specifically opt out of the paper version of the newsletter. To opt out, please send an e-mail to npdb-hipdb@sra.com and, in the subject line, specify "opt out of paper version of the newsletter."

The electronic newsletter is the ideal way to have important Data Bank information at your fingertips. Entities will be able to read, download, print, and share the newsletter with other interested colleagues at their convenience. In addition, users will be able to perform keyword searches within the newsletter to access the information that is of particular interest to them.

Data Bank users who are unsure about receiving an electronic-only version of the newsletter should bear in mind that the PDF newsletter can always be printed and read in hard copy. In addition, the current and archived newsletters are posted on the Data Bank Web site and are always available. Please update your user account information today and make sure your e-mail address is on file so you can receive the electronic newsletter. If you currently receive the newsletter, but are not a registered entity, e-mail the Data Banks with your e-mail address to receive the electronic version. Send an e-mail to npdb-hipdb@sra.com and, in the e-mail subject line, specify "Data Bank Newsletter e-mail." We are not eliminating newsletter information, only changing the way it is distributed to our readers. We believe these changes will benefit Data Bank users and that *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News* will continue to be a useful tool. ❖

Security Hints from the Data Banks

Password Reset Made Easy!

The request to reset a password is the most frequent type of call received in the Customer Service Center. The Data Bank password must conform to complex rules and must be changed every 90 days to ensure a high level of security. This level of security inherently leads to users requiring assistance with resetting their password. The new Password Reset Service simplifies and expedites the password reset process.

How Does It Work?

The Password Reset Service is available to Data Bank users who know their old password and have a current e-mail address on file with the Data Banks. Users of the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS), Querying and Reporting XML Service (QRXS), and Interface Control Document (ICD) Transfer Program (ITP) can all use the Password Reset Service.

When a user's password expires, they should follow these four steps to reset their password:

1. Click **Reset Password** on the *System Error*

screen. The **Reset Password** button is only available if you have an e-mail address in your IQRS user account.

2. Within several minutes, you will receive an e-mail. Click the link in the e-mail which authenticates the user and gives access to the IQRS using your expired password. **Note:** The e-mailed link expires within one hour, so users will need to access and reset their password promptly.
3. You will be prompted to create a new password.
4. The *Password Confirmation* screen displays, indicating that your password is updated. Click **Continue** to begin your Data Bank session.

If you have a question about this new service or need assistance resetting your password, you may contact your designated Entity Data Bank Administrator. If you are the Entity Data Bank Administrator, you may contact the Customer Service Center for assistance at 1-800-767-6732. ❖

QRXS Improvements

Recent enhancements to the Querying and Reporting XML Service (QRXS) improve submission and response file formats. The enhancements enable QRXS users to take advantage of the same functionalities that Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) users have enjoyed and offer many technical benefits over the legacy Interface Control Document Transfer Program (ITP) service.

QRXS improvements:

- Users will receive Data Bank Correspondence.
- Entities can elect to receive electronic notifications of report changes such as report corrections and notices of report disputes.

- Users may reset their own expired password using the Password Reset Service if a valid e-mail address is on file with the Data Banks.

QRXS is ideal for reporters who wish to submit reports electronically from their corporate information systems to the Data Banks. QRXS offers the advantage of verifying the reporting format without having to submit the transaction and wait 2 – 4 hours for validation responses from the Data Banks. QRXS validates the submission instantly.

The QRXS file format is updated periodically by the Data Banks. Users can receive notice of updates by joining the QRXS mailing list by signing up on-line at www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov/MailingListReg.html.

QRXS Improvements continued on page 5

Helpful Hints from the Data Banks

ENTITY DATA BANK ADMINISTRATORS

Don't forget that all Entity Data Bank Administrators must create a user account for themselves if they wish to query, report, or enroll subjects in the Proactive Disclosure Service Prototype (PDS). The Entity Data Bank Administrator account is strictly used for performing administrative tasks, such as creating user accounts, renewing and updating entity registrations, designating authorized agents, and resetting user accounts for users who forget their passwords.

ATTENTION AGENT ADMINISTRATORS!

When an agent elects to query or report on behalf of an entity, the Agent Data Bank Entity Administrator must assign at least one staff member to query or report for the new entity. If an entity Data Bank Identification Number (DBID) is not assigned to at least one user, the agent will be unable to query or report on behalf of the entity.

IQRS SUBJECT DATABASE

When subjects are enrolled in the PDS from the entity's Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) subject database, users will be given the option to keep or delete the subjects in the IQRS subject database.

This is helpful for entities that may have to file a report on an enrolled PDS subject.

PDS ENROLLMENT CONFIRMATIONS

PDS enrollment confirmations are now condensed to fit on one page per enrolled subject. PDS subscribers suggested this improvement to reduce the amount of paper for each PDS subject enrollment.

MORE THAN 10 LICENSES?

Entities and self-querying practitioners that wish to specify more than 10 State licenses can list all licenses on one form (for the IQRS, Interface Control Document [ICD] Transfer Protocol [ITP], Querying and Reporting XML Service [QRXS], and Self-Query forms) instead of having to submit multiple forms. Previously, the Data Banks could only collect up to 10 licenses.

INTERNATIONAL PHONE NUMBERS

The Data Banks now support international phone numbers. Up to 15 digits can be entered for the phone number on all Data Bank forms. ❖

QRXS Improvements continued from page 4

Users are notified 6 months in advance of updates to the QRXS file formats. The most recent QRXS Client Program and QRXS User Guide may be downloaded from the Data Bank Web site at www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov/qrxs.htm#Requirements.

The Data Banks make an effort to notify users at least 1 month in advance of updates to code lists. Users should expect code lists to be updated quarterly.

QRXS Querying Begins June 16, 2008!

Beginning on June 16, 2008, QRXS users will be able to query the Data Banks. The QRXS queries will be

validated instantly with a query confirmation. The confirmation will contain the batch Data Bank Control Number (DCN), the subject information for each subject submitted, and a status for each subject. If a subject does not pass the validation, a list of errors will be provided for the submitter to correct. Unlike the ITP, the QRXS will not charge submitters for queries that are rejected because of data problems. QRXS users already have the capability to submit reports to the Data Banks through the QRXS. ❖



Spotlight on PDS: Did You Know...

Did you know...that you can automatically receive new or updated reports on your practitioners through the Proactive Disclosure Service Prototype (PDS) without manually submitting a query?

PDS is equivalent to querying on your practitioners 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This new system was developed in response to the increasing interest in continuous monitoring of practitioner credentialing information as a factor in providing high-quality health care. Enrollment of your practitioners is easy and your entity can enroll subjects today! The system is user-friendly and meets the querying requirements in Federal law and the querying standards set forth by the Joint Commission, National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Did you know...that the PDS enrollment confirmation provides you with the same information that you receive when you submit a query?

The PDS enrollment confirmation includes all reports that are contained in the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) if you are using both Data Banks, on the enrolled practitioners. If there are no reports in either Data Bank on the enrolled practitioner, the PDS enrollment confirmation tells you there are no reports. Better yet, you have access to all reports on an enrolled practitioner at any time. For example, you enrolled Dr. Smith in January 2007. The enrollment confirmation informed you that there were two Medical Malpractice Payment

Reports submitted on Dr. Smith. You clicked on the link to the reports and you can read the reports. Fast forward to September 2007, and it is time to recredential Dr. Smith. You log in to the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS), go to Manage Subjects, and click on Dr. Smith's name to view and print the Medical Malpractice Payment Reports to file in the credentialing package.

As long as your practitioners are enrolled in the PDS, you do not need to query. Your practitioners are continuously monitored for reports; you are notified of new or changed reports; and the Data Bank information is always available.

Did you know...that you can enroll your practitioners in the PDS by using the subject database you have already created?

By following a few simple steps, you can quickly enroll up to as many as 1,000 practitioners at once. For more information on how to transfer enrollments from your Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) subject database into the PDS, see the *Fact Sheet on Enrolling a Subject in the Proactive Disclosure Service Prototype (PDS)*, located on-line at www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov/factsheet.html.

PDS users have the option to keep both the IQRS subject database and the PDS enrollment database. Some PDS subscribers use the IQRS subject database to submit reports to the Data Banks, so having both databases is useful. It is your responsibility to maintain the accuracy of both databases. ❖

Dear Data Banks...

This column answers questions about the Data Banks' policies and procedures. If you have a question, 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: A physician applying for appointment provided my entity with information about his claims history. When I compared that information to the results of our National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) query, I could not find the Medical Malpractice Payment Report (MMPR) from the insurance company that the physician says settled a claim on his behalf. What should I do?

Answer: As the querying entity, you should discuss the matter with the applicant for clarification. There are five reasons why this situation might occur:

- The query may not have contained adequate information to match an existing report.
- If the medical malpractice payment was made before the opening of the NPDB in 1990, it would not have been reported in the NPDB.
- Although the physician might have been involved in the case, if no payment was made for his benefit, no report should have been filed.
- If the practitioner was not named in both the claim and the settlement or judgment, no report should have been filed.

- A report should have been filed, but wasn't.

If you conclude that there should have been a report in the NPDB which you did not receive, please alert us to this fact by calling the Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732.

We want to be sure the Data Banks contain all the reports they should contain. For additional information regarding MMPRs, please see page E-8, of Chapter E, of the *NPDB Guidebook* located on the Data Banks home page under the Publications category.

Question: What is a *locum tenens* practitioner, and must the hospital query on the practitioner every time she comes to our facility?

Answer: A health care practitioner who works as *locum tenens* is a qualified health care practitioner who is placed into a temporary practice opportunity. Locum tenens practitioners are used to fill positions that are vacated by practitioners who are on sabbatical, vacation, or absent for an extended period for other reasons. Many times practitioners who are transitioning into retirement or practitioners who wish to have the freedom to travel to different locations for an assignment period become locum tenens practitioners. The health care entity must query on a locum tenens practitioner each time the practitioner applies for temporary privileges, not each time the practitioner comes to the facility. To reduce the querying burden, if your facility frequently uses a particular locum tenens practitioner, you may choose to appoint the practitioner to the consultant staff

or other appropriate staff category according to your by-laws. The facility would then query on the locum tenens practitioner biennially as part of the routine query process.

Question: A physician does not know that she is under investigation for possible professional incompetence and resigns from a hospital. Is the physician's resignation reportable to the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB)?

Answer: Yes. Regardless of whether the practitioner was aware that an investigation was being conducted, a practitioner's resignation or surrender of privileges must be reported if the practitioner was under investigation at the time of the resignation or surrender. The reporting entity must be able to produce evidence that an investigation was ongoing at the time of the resignation or surrender to support the report if the practitioner challenges the report. In addition, resignations and surrenders must be reported in situations in which the practitioner resigns or surrenders privileges after being notified that an investigation will be conducted before the investigation actually begins.

If you have a question, please call the Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732. Information Specialists 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. ❖

On the Horizon

New ITP File Formats

Interface Control Document (ICD) Transfer Program (ITP) users must update file formats before June 16, 2008. Visit the Data Bank home page at www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov to download the new ICD specifications for:

- Query Transactions.
- Adverse Action Reports.
- Judgment or Conviction Reports.
- Medical Malpractice Payment Reports.
- The Proactive Disclosure Service Prototype (PDS).

The ITP file formats are updated periodically. It is strongly recommended that ITP users join the ITP mailing list to receive notice of future updates. You may join the mailing list by completing the form found on the Data Banks Web site at www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov/MailingListReg.html. ❖

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