## Data Bank 101 for Pharmacists:
A Guide to the Data Bank and How it Affects You

Q: What is the Data Bank?

A: The National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) are flagging systems run by the Federal Government and are jointly referred to as the Data Bank.

The information in the NPDB assists State Licensing Boards, hospitals, and other health care entities in conducting extensive, independent investigations of the qualifications of health care practitioners they seek to license, hire, or grant medical staff membership or clinical privileges. The information in the HIPDB identifies health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers involved in acts of health care fraud and abuse.

Section 1921 of the _Social Security Act_ expanded the information that the NPDB collects and discloses on pharmacists and other practitioners. It enhances NPDB's ability to serve as a valuable pre-employment and pre-licensing resource for health care entities by collecting negative actions taken against **all** licensed health care practitioners, including pharmacists. (It was formerly limited to physicians and dentists.) Implemented on March 1, 2010, Section 1921 is intended to protect beneficiaries participating in the _Social Security's Act's_ health care programs from unfit healthcare practitioners and improve the anti-fraud provisions of these programs.
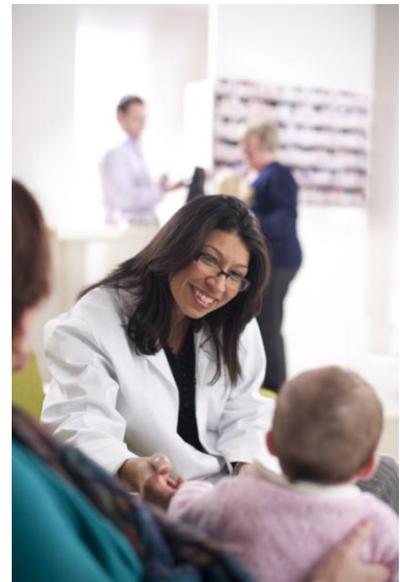
Q: Which Pharmacists are Reportable to the Data Bank?

A: Reportable pharmacy professionals are licensed or certified by their state and generally distinguished by their practice setting. They include but are not limited to: Community Pharmacists, Clinical and Hospital Pharmacists, Government and Military Pharmacists, Nuclear and Research Pharmacists. Pharmacy Technicians, Pharmacy Interns, and Pharmacy Assistants who are regulated by their state, are also reportable to the Data Bank.

Q: What is Reportable to the NPDB for Pharmacists?

A: The NPDB retains adverse actions taken against licensed and certified pharmacy professionals, including:

Must Be Reported
- Medical Malpractice Payments
- State Licensure Actions
- Other Negative Actions or Findings by State Licensing Authorities
- Medicare/Medicaid Exclusions
- Drug Enforcement Administration Actions

- Negative Actions or Findings by Peer Review Organizations and Private Accreditation Organizations

May Be Reported
- Clinical Privilege Actions, if applicable
- Panel Membership Actions, if applicable
- Professional Society Membership Actions

Q: What is Reportable to the HIPDB for Pharmacists?

A: The HIPDB retains official actions taken against licensed and certified pharmacy professionals. The following actions must be reported:

- Health Care Related Criminal Convictions
- Health Care Related Civil Judgments
- Federal or state Licensure and Certification Actions

- Exclusions from participation in federal and state health care programs
- Any other adjudicated actions*

*Please Note: Other final health care related actions or decisions that are taken by a government agency or health plan, which include a due process mechanism and affects or could affect delivery or payment of a health care item or service, are reportable to the HIPDB.

Q: Who Has Access to Reported Information?

A: State health care licensing authorities, including State Boards of Pharmacy, may view Data Bank reports taken against licensed and certified pharmacy professionals. Additionally, hospitals and other health care entities with a formal peer review process have access to NPDB-HIPDB reports on pharmacists and may use the Data Bank to verify a pharmacist's background as part of their pre-employment process. Lastly, professional societies with formal peer review have access to NPDB-HIPDB reports concerning licensed pharmacists.

Q: Does the Public Have Access to Reported Information?

A: Data Bank information is confidential and protected by the *Privacy Act*. The general public cannot query the Data Bank. Researchers may access de-identified information for statistical purposes only.

Q: What Does It Mean if I Have a Report in the Data Bank?

A: Health care organizations use Data Bank information as part of their licensing, credentialing, privileging, and reviewing processes for health care practitioners. Reports in the Data Bank are not a sole source of information. They should be used as part of an objective and circumspect review process that uses all available resources to make an informed decision to license, credential, or grant privileges to a practitioner.

Q: How do I Find Out if There is a Report on Me in the Data Bank?

A: Whenever the Data Bank receives a new report or a modification to an existing report, the practitioner is sent a notification, along with a copy of the report. You may also query the Data Bank online to verify whether it contains any reports on you. This process is called a *self-query* and can be accessed at Self-Query.

Because of the confidentiality of Data Bank information, self-query requests can be started online, but the full application must be printed, notarized and sent to the Data Bank to verify the requester's identity before the self-query can be completed. Once the self-query is processed, a printable self-query response will be available online.

All self-queries are processed through the NPDB and the HIPDB at a current cost of $8.00 per Data Bank, for a total charge of $16.00 per completed self-query. One official sealed copy will be mailed to you. You may request additional sealed copies at an additional charge of $16.00 per copy.

Q: Can I Add a Statement to a Report and/or Dispute the Report's Accuracy?

A: Yes. You may add a 4,000 character statement that informs queriers of your side of the story. Once a statement is processed, the Data Bank forwards it to anyone who made a query about you within the last three years. Your statement is included with the report when it is disclosed in the future. Instructions for adding a subject statement are on the document you received notifying you of the report and are also outlined on the web site Submit a Statement page.

Also, as the subject of a report, you may dispute the report's factual accuracy or whether it was submitted according to the NPDB and/or HIPDB's reporting requirements. You must first attempt to resolve the disagreement directly with the reporting organization before you begin the formal dispute process. Instructions for disputing a report are included in the document you received notifying you of the report, and are also outlined on the web site Dispute a Report page.

If you are unable to resolve the dispute with the reporting organization, you may request that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) review the report. This is called Dispute Resolution Review. Disputed reports are reviewed only for accuracy of factual information and to ensure that the information was required to be reported. For instructions on how to request a Report Review, see the web site's Elevate a Report to Report Review page.

For additional information or assistance, please contact The Data Bank Customer Service Center at: **1-800-767-6732.**

 Outside the U.S.: 1-800-767-6732 **Open: Mon. - Thurs. 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. ET, Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. ET**
TT/TDD: 1-703-802-9395 **Closed: Federal holidays**
Fax: 1-703-803-1964
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