

COMPREHENSIVE

Among surveyed queriers who received a match, only about 4 percent found information from other sources that the NPDB reports did not contain. Notably, most of those cases involved information on events that took place before the Data Bank opened for reporting and querying.

TIMELY

Entities receive responses to their queries in a timely manner. The majority of respondents said they received a response to their queries in one day or less. A bigger percentage of respondents felt that responses were more timely than those from a sample of entities that were surveyed in 1994.

AUTHORITATIVE

Surveyed queriers who received matches found information from other sources that wasn't in the NPDB less than 4 percent of the time. Only about 3 percent of the time did queriers with matches find information from other sources that contradicted information in NPDB reports. In most cases, when they made follow-up inquiries to resolve the contradiction, they found the NPDB information to be accurate.

A BASIC SOURCE

The majority of queriers who found NPDB information to be useful said that NPDB reports serve well as a basic source of credentialing information and confirm other sources of information.

For more information, visit the NPDB web site at www.npdb-hipdb.com.

Reporting to the NPDB

A survey questionnaire of reporters that elicited 643 responses shows that most reporters are satisfied with the NPDB reporting process.

SATISFIED

In a range of 1 to 7, with 6 or 7 meaning "very satisfied," surveyed users gave reporting to the NPDB an average satisfaction score of 5. Between 30 to 45 percent of them were "very satisfied" with reporting.

EASY

Assigning action classification codes for reports is not difficult for entities to accomplish. About 30 percent of respondents found assigning adverse action classification to be easy (1 and 2 on a 7 point scale of difficulty) and about 52 percent of respondents found assigning Harvard Allegation of Negligence Codes to be easy.

IMPROVING

Surveyed reporters recommended improvements in software user friendliness and instructions. Some changes have been made recently. An NPDB Interactive Training Program at www.npdb-hipdb.com shows reporters the step-by-step process for submitting and changing reports. The web site was also redesigned, making it easier to use.



The National Practitioner Data Bank

A SUCCESS STORY



The NPDB Works!

The NPDB: Proven Successful in Influencing Decisions on Health Care Practitioners

Is the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) meeting its intent? A recent study by the Institute for Health Services Research and Policy Studies and the University of Illinois at Chicago Health Policy Center shows the NPDB serves its users well and has a positive impact on the health care system. More than 1,000 queriers to the NPDB were randomly surveyed to find out more about their experiences with obtaining information from the Data Bank.

Users said information from the NPDB is:

IMPORTANT

Health care providers said the NPDB information used during the credentialing process is important. On a 1 to 7 scale, with 7 representing "very useful," three-quarters of surveyed queriers rated NPDB information a 6 or a 7. The average score was 6.16.

INFLUENTIAL

Fifty-seven percent of surveyed queriers found the NPDB information they received to be very influential (6 and 7 on a 7 point scale) in decision-making regarding practitioners.



MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Surveyed users said that 9 percent of the time they received a matched query response their decision to license or credential the practitioner would have been different if they had not received the NPDB information. This means that the NPDB's information changes almost 40,000 credentialing and licensing decisions each year.

NEEDED

The NPDB also provides useful types of information. Surveyed queriers said that 7 out of 10 sample types of NPDB information were very useful. Information considered to be the most important were revocations and suspensions imposed by State licensing boards, rated 6.86 and 6.78, respectively, on a 1 to 7 scale of importance. These facts show the NPDB provides data users need.

NOT PREVIOUSLY KNOWN

In a small but significant portion of cases, NPDB reports represent new information that may alter credentialing decisions. Of the more than 600 queriers who were asked about their match responses to queries, about 15 percent of them said they received new information. Thus, the NPDB helps show a more complete picture of a practitioner's background during the credentialing process.

NPDB information changes credentialing and licensing decisions



The Role of the NPDB

The National Practitioner Data Bank, administered by the HHS' HRSA, was established to ensure that unprofessional or incompetent physicians, dentists, and other types of health care practitioners do not compromise health care quality. Since opening on September 1, 1990, it has maintained records of licensure, clinical privileges, professional society membership, and Drug Enforcement Administration actions taken against health care practitioners as well as malpractice payments made for their benefit. The NPDB also has contained reports of exclusions from participation in the Medicare and Medicaid programs since 1997.

Entities paying malpractice claims on behalf of health care practitioners and organizations taking significant professional review actions must file reports with the NPDB. Since 1990, the NPDB has received more than 344,000 reports on more than 205,000 practitioners.

Hospitals are required to query the NPDB at the time a health care practitioner applies for clinical privileges or medical staff membership and biennially on those practitioners on the medical staff or holding clinical privileges. Other health care entities that engage in peer review are encouraged to query. The NPDB received over 3.2 million queries concerning individual practitioners in 2003 and has processed more than 32 million queries since its inception. Only about one-third of queries are required by law. The rest are submitted voluntarily.