

Effective prosecution of health care fraud and abuse requires significant research into the professional and criminal background of a subject. Uncovering this information can be tedious and time consuming, sometimes requiring an investigator to spend hours contacting separate sources for information on a subject's licensure, past health care-related convictions and judgments, and history of sanctions or other adverse actions.

The Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) makes finding this information fast and simple. A Web-based system, the HIPDB serves as a central database of adverse action information taken against health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers across the United States. Searching the HIPDB allows investigators to quickly retrieve pertinent information from a single source. The HIPDB provides investigators with access to:

- Health care-related criminal convictions and civil judgments taken against health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers in a Federal or State court.
- Federal and State adverse licensing and certification actions taken against health care practitioners, suppliers and providers.
- Exclusions of health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers from Medicaid, Medicare, and other Federal or State health care programs.
- Other adjudicated actions taken by health plans or Federal and State agencies.

Reports contained in the HIPDB are collected from health plans and a variety of State and Federal agencies nationwide, all of which are legally required to report to the HIPDB adverse actions taken against health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers. Sources of reports include:

- Health Plans.
- Federal and State Prosecutors.
- U.S. Department of Justice.
- Federal Bureau of Investigations.
- State Licensing Boards.
- State Medicaid Fraud Control Units.

- Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The HIPDB is simple and convenient to use. Federal, State and local law enforcement and investigative agencies can register and use the service via the Internet at [www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov](http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov). Registering with the HIPDB and supplying an Originating Agency Identification (ORI) number, provides investigators with the following benefits:

### Investigative Search Capability

Designed with the needs of the law enforcement community in mind, HIPDB's Investigative Search Capability (ISC) allows investigators to search the Data Bank for information using the latest Internet technology. Similar to submitting an Internet search, the ISC provides investigators with the flexibility of searching for HIPDB information by keyword, or specific field. Investigators can enter general words or phrases such as "psychologists" or "patient abuse" and the system searches for and returns reports containing those words in any part of the report text. Investigators also can search HIPDB information using the field search option. A field search enables an investigator

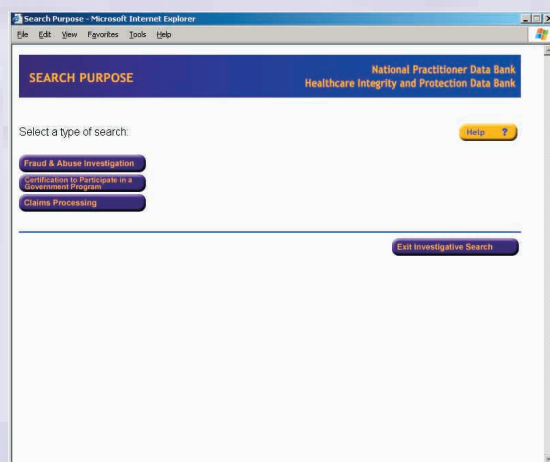


Figure 1. The Search Purpose Screen

to search on specific fields in HIPDB report data (e.g., name, Social Security Number, date of birth, city, State).

### Desktop Access

Authorized users simply log in to the system at [www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov](http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov), supply the appropriate Data Bank Identification Number (DBID) and password, submit searches, and download reports on-line.

### Confidentiality

Investigators can retrieve information from the HIPDB without compromising the confidential nature of an investigation. HIPDB searches conducted by law enforcement agencies as part of an investigation remain confidential and are not disclosed to subjects of an investigation. This protection is provided under an exemption to the *Privacy Act* (45 CFR Part 5b).

### Security

The HIPDB system uses the latest Internet technology to provide a secure environment for searching, reporting, data storage, and retrieval of information. Upon registration, entities are provided with a DBID and password that is required to gain access to the HIPDB. Password protection allows only authorized personnel to query or report information to the Data Bank. In addition, all HIPDB information is delivered via a secure Web server ensuring the confidentiality of the information. The system uses firewall protection and encryption of transmitted data to prevent unauthorized use.

### On-line Payment

Payment for querying the HIPDB is accepted via credit card or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), allowing investigators immediate access to reports. Federal agencies are exempt from this fee under HIPDB's authorizing legislation and receive free access to the system. State agencies should contact the HIPDB for more information on search fees.

For more information about HIPDB, please visit the Data Banks Web site at [www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov](http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov) or contact the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732.

## Information Contained in the HIPDB Can Be Used To:

- Identify patterns of criminal and fraudulent behavior.
- Obtain quick access to information on prior bad acts that can be used for sentencing recommendations and impeaching testimony.
- Evaluate the background of expert witnesses.
- Create a permanent record of criminal, fraudulent, or abusive behavior.
- Identify patterns of criminal and fraudulent behavior.
- Prevent offenders from repeating dangerous practices.
- Identify contacts for gathering of information on actions taken against a suspect.
- Determine which jurisdictions have taken actions against a suspect.

## Data for Investigative Follow-up

Data collected by the HIPDB can provide investigators with useful information for investigative follow-up. In addition to providing the date, type, and description of the action taken, HIPDB reports include:

- Subject identifying information (i.e., birthdate, professional school, address).
- DEA number.
- Social Security Number.
- Federal Employee Identification Number.
- Medicare provider/supplier numbers.
- Licensure information.
- Court venue and jurisdiction.
- Case numbers.
- Other names used by subject.

- Terms of sentences and judgments.
- Affiliated organizations and the nature of the affiliation.
- Reporter contact information.
- Other information related to the sanction.



The HIPDB is a program of the U.S. Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ). It is part of the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program created by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. The HIPDB is operated by the HHS Health Resources and Services Administration, Office of Workforce Evaluation and Quality Assurance, Practitioner Data Banks Branch.

# The Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

## Information for

- Prevention
- Detection
- Prosecution

of fraud and abuse in health care