



National Practitioner Data Bank

Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank



FACT SHEET ON HIPDB FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Background of the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

The detection and elimination of health care fraud and abuse is a top priority of the U.S. Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Health and Human Services (HHS). *The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996* (HIPAA) established a national Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program to help coordinate Federal and State law enforcement activities. HIPAA required the DOJ and HHS to create the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB). The HIPDB is a national database that collects and discloses reports of health care-related criminal convictions and civil judgments, exclusions from Federal and State health care programs, adverse licensure and certification actions, and other adjudicated actions taken against health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers.

The HIPDB is a joint program of the DOJ and the HHS's Office of the Inspector General. It is operated by the Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professions, Division of Practitioner Data Banks. The HIPDB became operational on November 22, 1999.

The HIPDB is a powerful information tool for law enforcement. It collects information pertaining to health care fraud and abuse from Federal agencies, agencies of all 50 States and the U.S. territories, and health plans. Information reported to the HIPDB provides a permanent record of criminal and civil violations regardless of expungement or erasure of the record or other orders of the court.

The HIPDB, which is a Web-based system that can be accessed from any desktop computer with Internet capability, helps to prevent health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers from abusing and defrauding the health care system and their clients.

Prosecutors and investigators may use the HIPDB to:

- Better select cases for investigation and prosecution.
- Obtain background information on a particular practitioner, provider, or supplier.
- Obtain information on prior bad acts for sentencing recommendations and impeaching testimony.
- Identify patterns of criminal or fraudulent behavior.
- Evaluate the background of expert witnesses.
- Prevent offenders from repeating dangerous practices.

Information contained in the HIPDB crosses State and jurisdictional lines. When prosecutors and investigators submit data to the HIPDB, they are providing information to their colleagues nationwide. For example, a State prosecutor in California may obtain information on an adverse licensure action in Maryland. Reporting convictions and judgments to the HIPDB promotes zero tolerance of fraud and abuse in the health care industry.

Reporting

Federal and State prosecutors are required under 45 CFR 61.8 to report to the HIPDB criminal convictions against health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers related to the delivery of a health care item or service. For example, if the owner of a home health agency is convicted of participating in a scheme to defraud Medicare for expenses not related to patient care, HIPAA requires the criminal conviction be reported to the HIPDB.

U.S. and State Attorneys are required under 45 CFR 61.9 to report civil judgments against health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers related to the delivery of a health care item or service. For example, if a judgment is entered against an ambulance company for filing false claims and receiving payment for ambulance service to destinations not permitted by law and not medically necessary, HIPAA requires the civil judgment be reported to the HIPDB.

Investigative Search Capability

The Investigative Search Capability (ISC) is a method of querying the HIPDB created exclusively for law enforcement. The ISC permits free-text searches that require less identifying information than the Explicit Query method available to non-law enforcement entities.

Registered entities with an Originating Agency Identifier number, also known as an ORI number, have access to the ISC. This capability permits authorized users to search on specific fields (subject's name, city, date of birth, etc.) or to search for words or phrases throughout the text of the report data. The HIPAA mandates that State agencies pay a small fee for using the ISC. For more information on the ISC procedures and fees, see the *Fact Sheet on HIPDB Investigative Searches*, located at www.npdb-hpdb.hrsa.gov/factsheet.html.

NPDB-HIPDB Assistance

For additional information, visit the NPDB-HIPDB Web site at www.npdb-hpdb.hrsa.gov. If you need assistance, contact the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center by e-mail at help@npdb-hpdb.hrsa.gov or by phone at 1-800-767-6732 (TDD 703-802-9395). 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 NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center is closed on all Federal holidays.