

Spotlight on Going Paperless... Did You Know?

You are reading the first all-electronic installment of Data Bank News, the most recent development in a series of Data Bank efforts to cut back on the use of paper. Over the past several years the Data Bank has implemented a variety of enhancements that streamline processes as a means of reducing paper mailings and eliminating the need for users to print reports and other materials. The Data Bank's determination to curtail its reliance on paper has resulted in an impressive list of achievements that are as user-friendly as they are environmentally friendly. The major milestones are listed below.

- **2008** - Data Bank users are offered the option of electronic **Report Change Notices**, instead of paper, through Administrator Notification Preferences.
- **2008** - **Quarterly newsletter is offered in a searchable PDF format.** Users have the option to discontinue paper newsletters and are encouraged to refer to the electronic, online version.
- **2009** - **Self-query responses** become available online, with mailing of hard copies only by request.
- **2009** - Data Bank **begins double-sided printing** of documents for mailing. These include subject notifications and self-query responses, and result in the savings of thousands of pages of output each year. In addition, query responses for dual-system queries (queries of both the NPDB and HIPDB) are incorporated into a single document, instead of generating two separate outputs.
- **2009** - **Report change notifications**, traditionally delivered to Data Bank users by mail, are incorporated into the system where they can be displayed and downloaded for users who opt out of paper mailings. As of January 2012, mailing of these documents is no longer offered.
- **2010** - Data Bank **Registration Confirmation responses** are delivered electronically instead of printed.
- **2011** - Practitioners can **submit Report Review documentation electronically** with the introduction of the Secure Messaging Service, which facilitates the safe transfer of electronic information. No more copying and mailing large quantities of supporting documentation for Disputes.
- **2012** - **Subject Notification Documents** are condensed to a single page in length. Also, **Report Change Notices** are transmitted online only, except in special circumstances.
- **2012** - **Electronic Report Forwarding** enables reporting entities to transmit reports directly to State Boards instead of mailing them.

Data Bank users have played a commendable, proactive role in these paper-reduction initiatives, by choosing electronic alternatives whenever possible. Your support of the Data Bank's goal to minimize dependence on paper has contributed to these landmark accomplishments. The all-electronic version of the Data Bank news, like the other changes introduced in recent years, aims for high value and ease of use, bringing you information that matters, when you need it, and how you like it.

New Data Bank Enhancements Will Improve User Experience

The Data Bank plans to implement several system enhancements that will improve the overall look and feel of the reporting and querying service and user experience. Below is a summary of the April 2, 2012 enhancements:

- **New Look** for the Data Bank Web site application pages including the querying and reporting pages, registration pages, and the report response service pages. The color scheme and page styles match throughout the Data Bank Web site - completing the total Web site transformation.
- **Immediate Report Results for Reporters** - No need to sign back into the system to retrieve reports. Reports are available in "real-time," which improves user workflows. The Report Verification Document (RVD) is returned immediately after report submission in PDF format and can be printed and downloaded to your computer.
- **Reporting Enhancements** - The Report Status page is now the Reporting Activity page, which:
 - Identifies the practitioner/organization by name instead of the Data Bank Control Number (DCN), making it easier for you to find the reports you are looking for. Users can click the name to view the reports on file for the subject and will see report details, including whether the report has been viewed and the submitter's name.
 - Identifies the most recently reported practitioner first.
 - Details the "Most Recent Activity" reported for each practitioner.
 - Provides active reports on demand. Previously the RVDs were only available for 45 days.

We are confident that the completion of the new Web site look and feel, along with the report enhancements, will improve your experience using the Data Bank.

Data Bank Identity-Proofing Effort Accelerates

The Data Bank would like to thank you for supporting our new identity-proofing initiative. This initiative entails verifying the identities of all users, and protects your organization from unauthorized access to the sensitive information stored in the Data Bank.

Identity proofing was implemented as a result of the January 2011 National Institute of Standards (NIST) requirements for reinforcing IT systems security in government. Since January 2011, more than 20,000 Data Bank users across 11,000 registered health care organizations have been identity-proofed.

Identity-proofing occurs during the Data Bank registration renewal process. If your organization has not yet renewed its registration, watch for a message prompt in the next few months, upon logging into the Data Bank system. Follow the easy, on-screen instructions to renew your registration. You will also receive a reminder email 60 days in advance of your renewal date.

Data Bank Unveils Expanded Research Statistics

Researchers are urged to explore the new content-rich [Data Bank Research Statistics](#), which greatly expand on the statistical data available through the Data Bank Web site. The new data utilizes interactive U.S. maps and tables to provide additional perspectives on National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) reporting statistics over a 10-year period.

The maps invite users to click on a State in order to access its reporting statistics. Counts, distribution percentages, and detailed breakdowns by type of action are accessible through the maps for Adverse Action Reports (AAR), while map data for Medical Malpractice Payment Reports (MMPRs) include breakdowns by payout amount. Supplemental tables provide cumulative report numbers by report type for State or nation, along with practitioner and population counts. The new research file that serves as the basis for the data represents the first time the Data Bank has used external data sources, such as U.S. Census Bureau records, in its statistical output.

Want More Data for Statistical Analysis?

The newly available NPDB Report Statistics supplement existing statistical information on the Data Bank Web site, which includes the:

- [Annual Reports](#) tables,
- [Summary Reports](#), and
- [Public Use Data File](#).

All of the data accessible through the Data Bank Web site are de-identified and aggregated. Researchers who require access to a more granular view of the data should submit their proposal by email (dpdbdatarequests@hrsa.gov), including their research objectives and table templates. The more detailed the information they provide, the more expeditiously the Data Bank can fulfill the request. The Data Bank is pleased to offer these data resources to meet the needs of the research community.

More to Come Soon

The Data Bank's research initiatives are rapidly evolving, and planning is already underway to provide even more comprehensive data in a greater variety of formats:

- Maps will permit selection of practitioner type by State and Nation.
- More practitioner types will be represented in the data, such as Professional and Para-Professional Nurses.
- Graphical output will include 10-year trends for MMPR and AAR counts by State and Nation.
- Customized reporting by geography, year, and practitioner type will include the ability for users to select the variables they wish to analyze.

Watch for upcoming news about these and other exciting data updates.

Reporters: How Does Report Forwarding Benefit You?

If your organization reports Medical Malpractice Payments, Clinical Privilege Actions, or Professional Society Action Reports, a new Data Bank report forwarding system enhancement can greatly streamline your processes.

Organizations that submit these types of actions are required by Federal law to mail a copy of the Report Verification Document (RVD) to the appropriate State Board. Since January 23, 2012, the new report forwarding capability enables organizations to forward an electronic report copy directly to the State Board using the Data Bank system. Once a report is electronically forwarded and viewed by the appropriate State Board, your organization will have met its reporting obligation under Federal law.

Benefits for Reporting Organizations:

- No need to remember to mail RVD to State Board. Reduces physical burden and cost of mailing paper copies.
- Facilitates compliance with Federal law.
- Streamlines workflow.
 - An email notifies you immediately when the electronic report is viewed by the State Board.
 - The reporting entity monthly summary email includes the number of reports electronically forwarded by your organization and the number of reports viewed by the State Board.
 - The Historical Report search option, shown below, allows filtering for reports that have been electronically forwarded and viewed by the State Board.
 - A revised Historical Report Summary page identifies the Board, and the date the report was viewed by the Board, and may also be downloaded to a spreadsheet.

Benefits for the State Board:

- Quick and timely receipt of electronic reports.
- Reduces paper files - The Board can store reports electronically.
- The State Board monthly summary email includes the number of electronic reports forwarded to and viewed by each State Board.



Take Advantage of This Opportunity

Participating in report forwarding is easy. To get started, complete the Report Input form as you normally do, and at the end of the report click the option indicating you want the report to be electronically forwarded to the appropriate State Board. (If the Board has not opted in to Report Forwarding, you will only see the option to print and mail a copy of the report.)

Once a report is forwarded, reporting organizations will receive an email either affirming that the report was viewed by the Board and they have met their reporting obligation; or explaining that the State Board has not viewed the report, or declines to view the report, and reminding the reporting organization they need to mail the report to the State Board. The flow chart details the report forwarding enhancement between the reporting organization and State Board. For more information, go to the Report Forwarding Tutorial. You may also read the January 2012 newsletter article, "[Enhancements Simplify Multiple Data Bank Processes](#)." The Data Bank Customer Service Center is available during business hours to answer additional questions at 1-800-767-6732.

Comment Period Begins on Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for Merging NPDB and HIPDB Operations

On February 15, 2012, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) published the NPRM in the Federal Register to implement Section 6403 of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010*. The purpose of Section 6403 is to eliminate duplicative data reporting and access requirements between the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB), and to streamline Data Bank operations. HRSA invites comments on this proposed rule.

The [NPRM](#) for implementing Section 6403 will close for public comment on April 16, 2012. To submit comments electronically, visit the [Federal eRulemaking Portal](#).

Section 6403 requires the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish a transition period to transfer all data in the HIPDB to the NPDB and, once completed, to cease HIPDB operations. Information previously collected and disclosed through the HIPDB will then be collected and disclosed through the NPDB. The statute's intent is to transition HIPDB operations to the NPDB while maintaining reporting and querying requirements.

Dear Data Bank

This column answers questions about Data Bank policies and procedures. If you have a question, please email "[Dear Data Bank](#)." We look forward to hearing from you!

How do I determine the correct "Date of Action" on my report form? Sometimes it can be a confusing field to complete.

The "Date of Action" is determined by the Board. It may be the date the order was signed or it may be the date the Board met to take the action. Either date is appropriate; it is up to the Board to determine the date.

Can you explain when a Judgment or Conviction Report (JOCR) should be submitted to the Data Bank?

Federal and State Government agencies and health plans are required to submit Judgment or Conviction Reports (JOCRs). A JOCR is used to report health care-related criminal convictions and civil judgments against health care practitioners, providers, and suppliers. For example, if the owner of a durable medical equipment supply company is convicted of health care fraud in a State court, the State's Attorney that prosecuted the case should report the conviction to the Data Bank. Health plans are only required to report civil judgments in cases in which they are the claimant with the largest award and no government agency is a party to the case.

If a practitioner fails to report a change of his home address to his State Licensure Board and is issued an administrative fine, would that be reportable to the Data Bank?

No, the issuance of an administrative fine for failure to report a change of address is not reportable to the Data Bank. Reportable administrative fines are related to the delivery of health care or taken with another reportable action.

How do I enable my Authorized Agent to enroll practitioners in the Continuous Query service on my behalf?

When your organization's Data Bank Administrator initially activates Continuous Query, the agent authorization preferences are automatically pre-populated. The Data Bank Administrator should update these preferences to specify Continuous Query authorization for the agent. After the Data Bank Administrator certifies the selections, the designated agent's Data Bank Administrator will receive an email notification of the change and may begin using Continuous Query. Note: If you are a Continuous Query user and are designating a new Authorized Agent, you may check the Continuous Query checkbox on the Agent Authorization form to give them Continuous Query ability.

If you would prefer to discuss a specific issue in person, 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

Fact Sheets for Your Profession

Based on your feedback, the Data Bank is developing fact sheets tailored to health care professions. The purpose of the fact sheets is for health care organizations to understand their Data Bank reporting and querying responsibilities. Fact sheets will provide a summary of useful information and answer frequently asked questions for nurses, chiropractors, pharmacists, Federal and State Licensing Boards, and other groups that query and report to the Data Bank. We will post the fact sheets on the Data Bank Web site when finalized, for easy access and distribution. If you are interested in a particular fact sheet for your organization or association, please email the Data Bank at help@npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov.