

## National Practitioner Data Bank Expanded to Include Licensure Information on CRNAs

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Effective March 1, 2010, the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) has been expanded to include adverse licensure information on all licensed healthcare practitioners and healthcare entities, not just physicians and dentists.

### What is the National Practitioner Data Bank?

The NPDB was created by Congress in the Health Care Quality Improvement Act of 1986, and is administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The NPDB protects beneficiaries participating in the Social Security Act's healthcare programs from healthcare practitioners who have engaged in unprofessional behavior. Prior to March 1, 2010, state medical and dental licensing boards were required to report adverse actions based on competence and conduct taken against physicians and dentists. Other healthcare professional licensing boards, such as nursing and pharmacy, were able to query the NPDB for information but were not mandated reporters.

### What Actions are Reported?

All state licensing authorities, including boards of nursing under the new regulations, must report the following actions: (i) revocation or suspension of a license, reprimand, censure, or probation; (ii) any dismissal or closure of the proceedings by reason of the practitioner or entity surrendering the license or leaving the state or jurisdiction; (iii) any other loss of the license, whether by operation of law, voluntary surrender (excluding those due to nonpayment of licensure renewal fees, retirement, or change to inactive status), or otherwise; and (iv) any negative action or finding that is publicly available information. In order to be reportable, state licensure actions must have been taken as the result of a formal proceeding. Adverse actions must be reported within 30 days of when the action was taken. Any revisions to that action, such as license reinstatement at a later date, must also be reported.

### What Information is Reported?

When reporting an adverse action taken against a healthcare practitioner, the state licensing authority must report the practitioner's name, social security number, address, sex, date of birth, and employment or professional identifiers, including organization, occupation and specialty, National Provider Number, educational back-

ground, and professional license identifiers. In addition to known practitioner identifiers, the report must include a narrative description of the acts or omissions and injuries upon which the reported discipline was based.

The NPDB already includes medical malpractice payments made for the benefit of all healthcare practitioners, including nurse anesthetists, and malpractice insurers remain mandated reporters under the new regulations.

### Who Has Access to this Information?

Information reported to the NPDB is considered confidential and is not to be disclosed outside of the strict request and disclosure procedures outlined in the statute. Information about specific practitioners is available to hospitals upon request. Hospitals must request information from the NPDB concerning each physician, dentist, and other healthcare practitioner for each new application for privileges received and every two years thereafter for privileged practitioners. Other healthcare entities, such as ambulatory surgery centers and physician offices entering into an employee or affiliate relationship with a physician, dentist, or other healthcare practitioner who has applied for clinical privileges at their facility may request information from the NPDB. Licensed healthcare practitioners may also self query the NPDB. Self-query instructions and FAQs are available from HRSA at <http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov/welcomesq.html>.

### What Recourse Do I Have if Inaccurate Information Has Been Reported about Me?

Healthcare practitioners who dispute the accuracy of information in the NPDB may file a written dispute with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and the reporting entity. If the reporting entity agrees with the practitioner's complaint and agrees to withdraw or retract its report, the NPDB will revise its information accordingly. If the reporting entity does not revise its initial report, the NPDB will review the matter and will side with either the practitioner or the reporting entity. If you have concerns with information reported about you to the NPDB, you should consult with a local health law attorney to discuss your options.

More information about the expansion of the NPDB is available from HRSA at <http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov/expansionNPDB.html>. You may also contact Amy Hader of the AANA's Professional Practice Division at [ahader@aana.com](mailto:ahader@aana.com) or (847) 655-8875 with any questions or concerns on this topic. ■