

## National Practitioner Data Bank

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A number of Fact Sheets are available from the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and detailed information can be obtained by calling the NPDB Help Line listed below **or going to the NPDB web site at [www.npdb-hipdb.com](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com)**. This *QuickInfo* was developed by the ACNM staff using NPDB Fact Sheets and is designed to answer frequently asked questions regarding the NPDB and certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs).

**NPDB Customer Service Line: 1-800-767-6732** To speak to an Information Specialist, call weekdays from 8:30 am to 6:00 pm (5:30 pm Fridays) EST. Or access their Web site at [www.npdb-hipdb.com](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com).

**What is the National Practitioner Data Bank?** The databank is an information clearinghouse to collect and release certain information related to the professional competence and conduct of physicians, dentists and, in some cases, other health care practitioners.

**Why was it created?** NPDB was created by the *Health Care Quality Improvement Act of 1986* (Title IV of Public Law 99-660) to improve the quality of health care by encouraging hospitals, State licensing boards and other health care entities, including professional societies, to identify and discipline those who engage in unprofessional behavior. It is intended to restrict the ability of incompetent physicians, dentists and other health care practitioners to move from state to state without disclosure of previous incompetence.

**What is reported to the NPDB?** There are five categories: 1) medical malpractice payments, 2) adverse licensure actions, 3) adverse clinical privileges actions, 4) adverse professional membership actions, and 5) exclusions from participation in Medicare and Medicaid. The NPDB law recognizes that a malpractice claim may be settled for reasons that do not reflect negatively on professional competence. There is no intent to construe a payment in settlement of a complaint or claim as medical malpractice.

**Are certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives included?** Yes. “Other health care practitioners” are defined as individuals other than physicians who are licensed or otherwise authorized by a state to provide health care services. However, reporting of nurse-midwives is mandatory for only the first of the five categories -- medical malpractice payments. Information about nurse malpractice payments (including nurse-midwives) is included in the NPDB Annual Report. Though hospitals and other health care entities must report professional review actions that adversely affect a physician’s clinical privileges for a period of more than 30 days, reporting of such actions against CNMs/CMs is voluntary, as is reporting by state licensing boards. The reporting of adverse professional membership actions taken against “other health care practitioners” is also voluntary. Since ACNM does not participate in professional review actions which affect membership, this category of reporting is not applicable for CNMs/CMs. **The Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General reports Medicare and Medicaid exclusions of CNMs/CMs.**

**Can I find out if I have been reported to the NPDB?** You can “self-query” the NPDB at any time by going to [www.npdb-hipdb.com](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com). Your self-query will also be processed against the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank. **There is a fee of \$10.00 for each data bank, for a total of \$20.00.** If you submit a *Request for Information Disclosure* form you will receive either a notification that no information exists in the NPDB, or information as it was reported. However, you should know if you have been reported, because a notification is sent to the practitioner whenever the NPDB processes a report.

**What if I am concerned about the accuracy of a report?** Practitioners **may not** submit changes to reports. If information is inaccurate, you must contact the reporting entity to request that a Correction be filed. If the reporting entity does not correct the report to your satisfaction, you may request Secretarial Review by the Department of Health and Human Services. Even if you do not dispute a report, you may also add your own statement (limited to 2000 characters) to a report.

**Who else has access to this information?** State licensing boards, hospitals and other health care entities. Plaintiff’s attorneys may query under certain circumstances. The NPDB is prohibited by law from disclosing information on a specific practitioner to a medical malpractice insurer, defense attorney or member of the general public.

In summary, the NPDB is a monumental data-collection process that has the potential to help protect the public and to provide useful information for practitioners. There are built-in protections for practitioners concerned about inaccurate reporting. If you have further questions or concerns about the NPDB, call their Information Specialists or the ACNM Professional Services staff.

#### **References & Bibliography:**

1. NPDB Fact Sheets:  
Fact Sheet on the National Practitioner Data Bank  
Fact Sheet for Physicians, Dentists, and Other Health Care Practitioners  
Fact Sheet on Security and Confidentiality of NPDB Information
2. Birkholz G. Implications of the National Practitioner Data Bank for nurse practitioners. *Nurse Practitioner* 1991; 16:40-46.
3. Illich D. NPDB-HIPDB 101: An introduction to the national practitioner data bank and the healthcare integrity and protection data bank. *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners* 2006;2:6:397-403
4. Jordan LM, Oshel RE. Nurse anesthetist malpractice and the National Practitioner Data Bank. *Journal of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists* 1998; 66:567-573.

The ACNM “*QuickInfo*” series was developed by the Department of Professional Services to respond to common inquiries, summarizing ACNM resources regarding a particular topic, as well as listing selected literature and a variety of other resources. Your feedback is welcomed; contact Professional Services at 240-485-1800; [info@acnm.org](mailto:info@acnm.org). 5/11/99. Revised 03/16/07.