

AMA response to The Joint Commission principles for users of external credentialing agents and sources regarding the primary source reported data contained in the AMA Physician Masterfile

As outlined in The Joint Commission (TJC) Accreditation Standards, the AMA Physician Masterfile is deemed an “equivalent source” for physician **medical school** and **postgraduate medical training**.

The AMA Physician Masterfile has been designated by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS®) as an official display agent of ABMS board certification information. Therefore, the AMA Physician Profile is considered a designated “equivalent source” for ABMS board certification in accordance with TJC standards. TJC states that an organization or entity may designate a display agent for its information (as ABMS has done for the AMA Physician Profile). A copy of the official letter from ABMS designating the AMA Physician Profile as an official display agent is available at the end of this document.

The other primary-source-reported information on the AMA Physician Profile (e.g., state licensure, federal DEA registration, etc.) is subject to TJC principles for evaluating an external agent for primary source credentialing information (“external agent principles”). The AMA Physician Masterfile meets and/or exceeds these TJC principles for the additional primary source information on the Profile.

As previously noted, the medical school, postgraduate medical training, and ABMS board certification information on the AMA Physician Profile are not subject to these external agent principles. However, they have been included in the responses to these principles to provide additional information to the user.

Following are the AMA’s responses to these principles regarding use of the AMA Physician Masterfile.

1. The agency makes known to the user the data and information it can provide.

AMA Response

A [sample profile](#) is available publicly on the AMA Credentialing Services website. All physician information on the Profile is from a primary source except current practice data provided by the physician (e.g., self-designated practice specialty, current address, etc.). The sources of these primary data are labeled as follows:

- Current and/or historical medical school
- Current and/or historical postgraduate medical training program accredited by Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)
- Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) applicant number
- Current and historical state license(s), initial year granted, expiration date status, type, indication of sanction(s), and last reported date (date when AMA last received information from the board)
- Federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

AMA Physician Masterfile operating procedures for data used to support the physician credentialing process is provided in the following table:

Element	Primary Source(s)	Added to File
Birthdate	Medical schools, residency programs	Ongoing
Current and historical medical school and date of graduation	Medical school graduation and matriculation reports	Annually
Current and historical ACGME-approved graduate medical training programs	ACGME — specialty board-approved combined post graduate medical training programs (completed, incomplete, and in progress)	Annually
ABMS® board certification (primary board and sub-board)	American Board of Specialties	Weekly
Current licensure	68 licensing boards	47 boards (monthly) 6 boards (bi-monthly) 10 boards (quarterly) 4 boards (semi-annually) 1 board (3x per year)
Licensure disciplinary actions	Licensing boards	16 boards (monthly) 3 boards (bi-monthly) 14 boards (quarterly) 6 boards (ongoing) 4 boards (semi-annually) 2 boards (semi-monthly)
Federal DEA registration (expiration date, business activity, drug schedule, payment indicator, last reported date)	DEA	Bi-monthly
ECFMG applicant number	ECFMG	Monthly
Name/former name	Various	Ongoing
Physician's Recognition Award (PRA)	AMA	Ongoing
NPI	NPPES	Monthly

Additionally, the AMA offers its Continuous Monitoring Service, in which a Profile user is notified of any changes to the data contained in a physician's Profile for a two-year period. Should a change occur, the user is sent an updated Profile. The following data elements are monitored under the Continuous Monitoring service:

- Medical licensure
- NPI
- State and federal action notifications
- DEA registration
- ABMS board certification
- Medical school
- ACGME-approved medical training

Updated: Sept. 1, 2021



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Your trusted source and partner. Together, making healthcare care better.
ABMS®

April 01, 2004

To whom it may concern:

The ABMS® considers the provision of physician specialty board certification data as an important part of its ongoing mission and views the credentialing process and the credentials verification sub-process as a foundational component of patient safety.

Thus, the ABMS® takes the validity, credibility, reliability and integrity of its primary equivalent source data very seriously. The ABMS® carefully reviews what products and organizations will be allowed to distribute ABMS® Board Certification Data based upon concerns for patient safety, and compliance with JCAHO, NCQA and URAC accreditation requirements.

Effective 01 April, 2004, The **American Medical Association**, an Official Licensee of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) is hereby designated as an **Official ABMS Display Agent** to serve as one of the providers of primary source equivalent ABMS® Specialty Board Certification Data when such Data is delivered through the following AMA authorized products and services and no others:

AMA E-Physician Profile

AMA Masterfile (for uses approved in the
ABMS/AMA License Agreement)

Designation as an ABMS® Display Agent is conferred on a product or application specific (not organizational) basis.

ABMS® Official Display Agents agree to abide by guidelines contained in their respective licensing agreements with ABMS, which are intended to protect the security and quality of data. ABMS® Board Certification Data may be considered as primary source verified only if sourced from specific products and services approved for Official Display Agent status by ABMS. These products vary in format; features, functionality, intended application and data update frequency. Users of these products should determine the most appropriate sources for their unique needs.



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While the ABMS® Data might still be sourced from other sources that do not bear Official Display Agent designation, the ABMS® is not currently able to validate or control (according to the minimum mechanisms deemed necessary) the processes and data security and integrity as they pertain to the ABMS®'s Data reliability standards.

Thus, the ABMS® recommends that persons or entities using ABMS® Data for any purpose, including particularly for physician credentialing and privileging purposes, rely on products and services from the ABMS® or Official ABMS® Licensees bearing the designation of "Official ABMS® Display Agent."

The ABMS® shall promulgate an updated list of Official Display Agents to accrediting bodies as changes are made to that list.

Thank you for supporting the promotion of quality healthcare in the United States.

Stephen H. Miller, MD, MPH
Executive Vice President

Ethics. Honor. Skill. – ABMS®

Cc: JCAHO, URAC, NCQA

Inquiries regarding Official ABMS® Display Agent Status and other business related questions may be directed to:

Robert G. Nelson, MBA
Director of Business Development
The American Board of Medical Specialties

rmelson@abms.org
847 491 9091 (x3005)

<http://www.abms.org>



July 26, 2016

Tammy Weaver
Director Database Products and Services
American Medical Association
330 North Wabash Avenue, Suite 39300
Chicago, IL 60611-5885

Dear Tammy,

NCQA acknowledges that the American Medical Association uses NCQA-approved sources to verify credentialing information and it maintains this information in the Physician Masterfile. The AMA Physician Masterfile is an NCQA-approved source for verification of:

- Graduation from Medical School
- Completion of Residency
- Board Certification
- DEA Status
- Medicare and Medicaid Sanctions (effective 7/1/16)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Patrick Dahill'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patrick Dahill
Assistant Vice President, Accreditation & Measures Policy



Accreditation Association
for Ambulatory Health Care, Inc.

November 18, 2004

To AAAHC-accredited organizations:

Effective March 1, 2005, Appendix J of the *Accreditation Handbook for Ambulatory Health Care*, published by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC) is revised to list the AMA Physician Master Profile as a primary source for verification of a physician's credentials. The Master Profile is accepted for verification of medical school, residency training, board certification, DEA status and Medicare/Medicaid sanctions.

AAAHC is a leading accrediting body for ambulatory health care, conducting surveys of ambulatory surgery centers, physician office practices, endoscopy centers, student health centers, managed care entities and other health care organizations. For more information on AAAHC, please visit our web at www.aaahc.org.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adrian Hochstadt".

Adrian Hochstadt
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