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Description of AMA Physician Masterfile data for AMA Physician Profiles

For more than 60 years, the AMA has made the AMA Physician Masterfile available to the health care community to serve the public good and the medical industry. The Masterfile includes significant education, training and professional certification information on virtually all Doctors of Medicine (MD) educated in the United States. The Masterfile also includes information on Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) and international medical graduates who practice in the United States.

The AMA Physician Profile reports the following primary source information from the data maintained on the Masterfile. Each Masterfile record includes the physician's name, medical school and year of graduation, gender, birthplace, and birthdate. Additional data (i.e., residency training, state licensure, board certification, geographical location and address, type of practice, present employment, and practice specialty) are added from primary data sources or from surveying the physicians directly as their professional careers develop.

Profile data elements supplied by the physician

The following data elements appear at the start of the AMA Physician Profile and can be supplied by the physician.

Name

At the time that a record is created, the name given by the reporting entity is used to establish a physician or student record on the AMA Masterfile. Name changes can be submitted to the AMA from data providers and from the physician personally. However, all name changes require legal supporting documentation before any update can be made to the physician's data. Acceptable supporting documents include the following:

- Marriage/divorce certificate
- Citizenship document
- Passport
- Birth certificate

Address

A physician's professional mailing address appears on the AMA Physician Profile. This address is typically assigned by the physician and can be either a home or office address. Sources of address changes can also include:

- AMA mailings and publications
- Physician correspondence
- Correspondence from hospitals, government agencies, medical societies, specialty boards, and licensing agencies

To ensure quality, all addresses are run through the PostalSoft address validation software prior to application to the Masterfile. A primary office address appears when it has been reported to AMA.

Telephone number

The Masterfile maintains physician office and fax telephone numbers. These numbers are routinely screened to ensure valid area code and three-digit exchange.

Birthdate

A physician's date of birth is collected by the AMA through a variety of sources, including information received directly from the physician, medical and training institutions, state/federal agencies, and the Education Commission on Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG). Supporting documents such as passport and birth certificate are required for changes to physician data.

Major professional activity

Major professional activity (MPA) classifications are determined by the combination of type of practice and present employment as reported by physicians, through other channels of communication with the AMA, or by AMA business rules regarding type of practice, present employment, MPA, and self-designated practice specialty. MPA categories and values maintained in the Masterfile include:

- Patient care activities
 - Office-based practice
 - Hospital-based full-time physician staff
 - Hospital-based resident
 - Locum Tenens
- Nonpatient care activities
 - Administration
 - Medical teaching
 - Research
 - Other activities (such as physicians employed by insurance carriers, pharmaceutical companies, corporations, voluntary organizations, medical societies, associations, grants, foreign countries, etc.)
 - Inactive
 - Not classified

Self-designated practice specialty

Physicians may report their self-designated practice specialties (SDPS). The AMA currently has a primary SDPS for more than 99.8% of physicians who have completed their postgraduate training and 97% of all active physicians. Self-designated practice specialties listed on the AMA Physician Masterfile do not imply recognition or endorsement of any field of medical practice by the association, nor does it imply certification by a member medical specialty board of the American Board of Medical Specialties or that the physician has been trained or has special competence to practice the SDPS.

Profile data elements verified with the primary source

The remaining data elements on an AMA Physician Profile are verified directly with the primary source and cannot be supplied or changed by the physician. If data is not provided to the AMA by the primary source, the words "NO DATA REPORTED AT THIS TIME" will display within the respective Profile section.

Medical schools attended, degree awarded/not awarded indicator, year of graduation

Medical school information includes all schools attended. US medical school information is verified directly from the school. In some instances, a medical school will designate the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) as its verification agent. Instances of verification by NSC are indicated on an AMA Profile when applicable.

Degree awarded verifies whether the school awarded a medical degree and is populated by one of the following values: “Yes,” “No,” “Enrolled,” and “5th Pathway.” (The *degree awarded* value of “5th Pathway” applies to that US medical school where a foreign-trained physician completed supervised clinical work. An AMA Profile will also include a separate school record for the foreign medical school from where the physician originally graduated. AMA discontinued the Fifth Pathway program in 2009.)

Degree type awarded by the school is populated with either a value of “MD” or “DO.”

Enrollment date is understood to mean the date a student begins a pre-matriculation program, attends orientation immediately preceding enrollment, or becomes enrolled in classes at a medical school. Enrollment date is included on the AMA Profile when reported by the school. Date information provided by primary sources does vary so not all dates may be reported or displayed with month and year. Enrollment date for international medical graduates is never reported to AMA.

The *degree date* on an AMA Profile is understood to mean the date a physician is awarded (or projected to be awarded) his/her degree upon completion of the degree program. A year is always reported by the medical school and shown on the profile; the month in which the degree was awarded is included only when provided by US schools.

Current and/or prior graduate medical training provided by ACGME-accredited programs only

The Profile lists only training programs that have been accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The AMA Profile does not include non-ACGME accredited training programs, and the absence of such does not necessarily indicate a gap in training. Training performed in Canada or at an accredited US osteopathic institution is updated only upon verification by the program, and such training is accepted as equivalent to training performed at an ACGME-accredited program by US licensing authorities.

A *sponsoring institution* is defined as the institution (e.g., a university, medical school, hospital, school of public health, health department, public health agency, organized health care delivery system, medical examiner’s office, consortium, or educational foundation) that assumes the ultimate responsibility for a graduate medical education (GME) program. ACGME-accredited GME programs must operate under the authority and control of a sponsoring institution, which must be appropriately organized for the conduct of GME in a scholarly environment and committed to excellence in both medical education and patient care. A sponsoring institution must be in substantial compliance with the ACGME Institutional Requirements and must ensure that its ACGME-accredited programs are in substantial compliance with the Institutional, Common, and specialty-specific Program Requirements. The sponsoring institution on an AMA Profile reflects the program, not the actual physical location of that training. For example, a resident may train at Grady Hospital in Atlanta, but the sponsor of that program is Emory University. The GME segment would reflect Emory University on the AMA Profile. The sponsoring state relates back to the sponsoring institution.

A *program name* is only reported for graduate medical training received in 2010 and later years. Program name is assigned by ACGME and is reflective of the sponsoring institution with which the program is associated.

The *specialty* in which the physician trained in the program is indicated on the Profile. Specialty is followed by explanation of the *training type* only for training received in 2016 and later years. Training type can be populated with one of two values: “Specialty” (meaning a residency program) or “Subspecialty” (meaning a fellowship program).

The majority of training programs are on a July to June cycle. **The AMA re-verifies the training information each year a resident is actively training at a program until their training has been completed.** Re-verification activities include a postgraduate medical training survey made available to GME program directors in July of each year. The vast majority of programs (80%) respond to the online survey by the end of October, the final survey response rate is typically 97%.

The verification status for GME data may display in one of the following ways:

- “Completed” indicates that the training has been completed in its entirety and verified with the program.
- “Training in Progress” indicates the training has a future completion date and is verified as in progress.
- “Verification of Completion in Progress” indicates the training has a past completion date and was verified as in progress but the program has not yet verified completion.
- “Partially Completed” indicates the training is verified as partially completed but the physician either changed programs or did not complete the training.

License(s)

Licensure data is obtained on a varied schedule based on the business rules and capabilities of each of the individual boards. The vast majority of states provide information monthly or quarterly. Current and historical licensure data is on the Profile.

The *License Number* on an AMA Profile represents the full number as reported by the board to AMA.

Degree (MD/DO) indicates that either a “MD” or “DO” license was issued. In specific circumstances, a physician may have more than one license in a given state.

Locale indicates the state or US territorial board that issued the medical license. All values are abbreviated using postal abbreviations.

Date Granted on the Profile is the date the license was initially granted by the licensing authority.

Expiration Date and *Renewal Date* are listed as reported by the licensing authority. The majority of the licensing authorities require that practicing physicians renew their state registration each year or every two years; a few states have longer registration intervals. More than 99.8% of all active licenses on the AMA Physician Masterfile have an expiration or renewal date. Not all boards maintain or provide full date values. In instances where a specific month and day are not reported by a board, a default value of “01” is used. For example, a record with a date of 01/01/1978 uses the default value since the true month and day were not reported.

Status may display one of the following values: “Active” or “Inactive.” When a board has not provided current information, the value is displayed as “Unknown.” If a physician has decided not to reregister a state license, the license status will be reported as inactive by the board. A license will also be reported as inactive if the license has been suspended or revoked by the board. In some states, inactive licenses are issued to physicians who want to maintain licensure in that state though they are currently practicing in another state.

Values for *License Type* include “Unlimited,” “Limited,” “Resident,” and “Temporary.” Each state has varying requirements prior to issuing a physician an unlimited (that is, full and unrestricted) license. For the most part, an unlimited license allows the physician to practice medicine as defined by the State’s Medical Practice Act. Nearly all boards issue educational licenses, permits, certificates, or registration to resident/fellow physicians in graduate medical education programs. For many of these boards, residents/fellows must obtain a new permit or license when changing residency/fellowship programs within a state. Most boards issue non-educational temporary permits, limited and temporary licenses for the practice of medicine. Awarding of these licenses may be contingent on certain requirements,

depending on the given jurisdiction. The terms for the issuance of such licenses can vary but, in general, they must be renewed once a year with stipulated maximum number of renewals allowed.

Last Reported is a date that reflects the last time that data pertaining to a record was provided to the AMA from the individual licensing board. If the value of the *Status* is “Unknown,” a date will not be displayed for *Last Reported*.

Name on License reflects the name that the physician used when applying for the medical license. This information comes to AMA from the boards. A number of records with a *Status* of “Inactive” present the value “NRT” (an abbreviation for “Not reported”) instead of a name due to the historical nature of the record.

Licensure disciplinary actions

Disciplinary actions (current and historical) by a State Licensing Board are indicated in the section of the Profile titled *Action notifications reported to the AMA*. The type of action taken varies. Action details, including information regarding type of action taken, must be obtained directly from the licensing jurisdiction.

Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates certification

Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certification provides assurance to directors of ACGME-accredited residency and fellowship programs and to the people of the United States that graduates of foreign medical schools have met minimum standards of eligibility required to enter such programs. ECFMG certification is also a prerequisite for licensure to practice medicine in most states and is one of the eligibility requirements to take Step 3 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination.

The ECFMG applicant identification number that appears on the Profile does not imply current ECFMG certification status. The ECFMG Certification Verification Service is available [online](#).

US Drug Enforcement Administration

US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Registration data is received twice per month.

To comply with longstanding AMA policy regarding the confidentiality of DEA registration numbers (H-100.982), an AMA Profile only displays the last three characters of a DEA number as provided by the DEA.

Business Activity distinguishes registrants under set categories and further defines them by subcategories. Physicians—as well as dentists and veterinarians—fall in category C. Subcategories associated with category C indicate whether a physician (or other practitioner) has a connection to the military, Department of Defense, or federal organization. Subcategories also identify those physicians who hold a DEA DATA waiver.

Activity indicates whether a registrant is authorized to handle the controlled substances listed in the *Drug Schedule*. It is possible that a record may show an expired date yet still possess an “Active” status. The DEA notes that this occurs when the registration is under an administrative hold.

Payment Indicator will display a value of “Paid” when the physician has paid the application fee to obtain a DEA registration certificate. An “Exempt” value is displayed for physicians who are officials of a federal or state agency or of a political subdivision or agency and, therefore, exempt from the application fee. If a physician with an exempt status enters into private practice, s/he must pay for a new DEA registration.

Values for *Expiration Date*, *Last Reported*, and *Address* are displayed as reported by the DEA.

As noted on the Profile, many states require their own controlled substances registration/license, and the AMA does not maintain this information.

American Board of Medical Specialties specialty board certification

The AMA Physician Profile has been designated by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS®) as an Official ABMS Display Agent of Member Board Certification data. AMA receives weekly data updates from ABMS.

A Profile will reflect all unexpired primary board segments reported by the ABMS with *Effective Date*, *Expiration Date*, and *Last Reported* date. For those boards participating in Maintenance of Certification (MOC), the *Duration* value is displayed as “MOC+” and includes a corresponding *Reverify Date*. There may be one initial certificate for each primary board, but multiple recertification segments for each primary board.

A Profile will reflect all sub-specialty certificate segments reported by ABMS. There may be one initial certificate for each sub-specialty certificate but multiple recertification segments of each certificate. There are a significant number of ABMS Boards that do not provide board certification expiration dates.

Not all boards maintain or provide full date values. In instances where a specific month and day are not reported by a board, a default value of “01” is used. For example, a record with a date of 01/01/1978 uses the default value since the true month and day were not reported.

Physician’s Recognition Award(s)

The AMA Physician’s Recognition Award (PRA) certificate recognizes physicians who complete at least fifty hours of continuing medical education annually.

Federal sanctions

Federal sanctions, like state board sanctions, are compiled within the section of the AMA Profile titled *Action notifications reported to the AMA*.

If the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in relation to Medicare and Medicaid regulations has taken action (current or historically), the Physician Profile will indicate that an action has been reported and direct users to the DHHS Office of Inspector General Web site for more information.

If the US Department of Justice reports an action against a physician’s DEA registration, the Profile will indicate an action has been reported and direct users to contact the DEA for more information.

National Provider Identifier

A physician’s National Provider Identifier (NPI) is a unique 10-digit number issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in the United States. The AMA receives NPI data from the National Plan & Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) on a monthly basis.

AMA Profiles display the physician’s current and /or historical *NPI Number* and *Enumeration Date* (the date the NPI was assigned), *Deactivation Date*, *Reactivation Date*, or *Replacement Number* display when applicable. A value of “NOT RPTD” (meaning “not reported”) will display if NPI information is not received from NPPES for a particular field.

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