

Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH) Universal Credentialing DataSource Frequently Asked Questions

What is the objective of the CAQH Physician Universal Credentialing DataSource?

The CAQH Universal Credentialing DataSource is designed to accomplish administrative simplification by gathering credentialing data in a single repository that may be accessed by participating health plans and other healthcare organizations. Its objective is to simplify the credentialing data gathering process and enable physicians and other health care providers to easily update their information.

Why is the CAQH Universal Credentialing DataSource important to me?

Healthcare organizations such as health plans and hospitals evaluate physicians and other health care providers with whom they contract to confirm that the healthcare providers under contract are adequately trained, certified and/or licensed to provide care. One of the most integral parts of the credentialing process is the collection and verification of vital data from the physician regarding his or her education, training, experience, practice history, location, disclosure of any issues impacting their ability to provide care and other background information. Credentialing involves a tremendous amount of paperwork and administrative time. The CAQH Universal Credentialing DataSource will greatly reduce the amount of administrative time required in this process for physicians and other health care providers.

How can I access this database?

Access and registration instructions will be sent to physicians and other healthcare providers as the initiative is launched in your market. You can use your personal ID and password to directly access the database over the Internet at <https://caqh.geoaccess.com/oas/>. You can transmit the completed application electronically through your modem, or you may call the CAQH Help Desk at (888) 599-1771 to request an application be sent by mail to complete the application off-line and then fax it back to a toll-free number.

How will my confidentiality be maintained within the database?

All systems are secured to ensure that only authorized providers and healthcare organizations can access appropriate data. Only healthcare organizations authorized by a provider have access to provider data, and a provider has access only to his or her own data.

The CAQH Universal Credentialing DataSource is designed to be compliant with all laws, rules and regulations relating to the privacy of individually identifiable health information. In addition, CAQH will comply with any applicable laws and regulations pertaining to confidentiality and security in the development of the database and the data collection process.

The CAQH database is housed in a secure Network Operations Center that is controlled by biometric hand scanners. It is limited to engineers and monitoring staff. All network traffic to and from the center is routed through redundant firewalls for complete security to the database and online systems. Secure Internet accesses to application screens, use of passwords, electronic signatures/certificates, and powerful 128-bit Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryption are used to ensure only authenticated use of the system. Only password/PIN-authenticated users have access to their restricted data over connections that automatically encode all information exchanges. Virus detection mechanisms are used to ensure that the database and the Websites are free of all viruses. Routine tape back-ups protect all volatile system data and are secured in an off-site storage facility.

Who is paying for the database and how much does it cost?

There is no cost for physicians and other health care providers to use the credentialing application database. The costs associated with the design and development of the database and data collection process has been funded by CAQH through membership fees. Health plans and other healthcare organizations participating in the initiative will pay a set administrative fee and set fee per provider to access the database. To access the database, interested organizations should contact CAQH for more information about pricing.

Do I need to complete the entire application?

Yes, you are expected to complete all questions on the application. The electronic application will present the questions to you in an interview style approach, with logic that presents the questions that are relevant to your particular specialty or provider type. The system is designed to allow you to complete the application over time. You can stop any time, save what you have completed and return later to finish the process. The entire application must be completed prior to your verification of its accuracy, and before the participating health plans that you have authorized can access it.

If the pre-populated data is incorrect, will I be able to override and correct online?

Yes. The main purpose of the pre-population process is to facilitate the use of the application for providers by pre-filling as many data fields as possible with available information. The provider can simply validate and/or correct the pre-populated information.

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How do I input my data if I do not have Internet access?

You call the CAQH Help Desk at (888) 599-1771 to have an application sent by mail. All you need to do is complete this paper copy and fax it back to a toll-free number (866-293-0414).

Can I use this process to submit information to non-participating health plans and to my hospital affiliations?

If you are contracted with a health plan that is not participating in the CAQH Credentialing Data Initiative, you will need to continue to deal with that organization directly, separate from the database process. Providers can, at any time, print their CAQH application and send it to non-participating organizations. All health plans, hospitals and other healthcare organizations are invited to participate in the CAQH Universal Credentialing DataSource initiative, regardless of whether they are members of CAQH. If one of the health plans with which you contract is currently not participating in the initiative, please ask them to visit the CAQH Website at www.CAQH.org for further information.

Will there be assurance that no one can update my information except me?

During the initial registration process, providers will create a unique system ID number and confidential password. This user ID and password is required to access the Universal Credentialing DataSource for updates and changes. The password may be changed at any time by accessing the on-line application website and following the listed instructions.

Why do I need to review and attest to my information four times a year?

Because many health plans with which you do business will be using this system for recredentialing and ongoing updating of provider directory records, it is important that the database contains the most accurate and up-to-date information. This may be quickly done via online access. By checking and attesting to your data four times a year, participating health plans can access current information from the database at the time of recredentialing or database updates, without having to contact you repeatedly. This will help to ensure that you continue to conform to the requirements of each participating health plan with which you contract.

Can I use the CAQH database to report any changes to my practice such as address, phone numbers, and new associates?

The notice section of your agreement with each of the participating health plans typically requires you to communicate certain changes to your personal information immediately. Rather than contact each of these plans individually, you can enter your changes once into the CAQH database for all authorized participating plans to access. Please be aware, however, that only plans that participate in the CAQH Universal Credentialing DataSource and that have been authorized by you to access your information will receive any changes. You will still need to contact any non-participating plans directly.

How will my information be sent to various health plans?

Once a provider completes the application, all the information is automatically made available to authorized health plans, hospitals and other healthcare organizations with whom you participate.

Can any health plan access my data?

No. You control which plans have access to your application information. When completing the application, you will indicate which participating health plans and healthcare organizations will be authorized to access your application data.

What if I participate in a health plan that is not participating in the CAQH Universal Credentialing DataSource?

If you are contracted with a health plan that is not participating in the CAQH Universal Credentialing DataSource, you will need to continue to deal with that organization directly, separate from the database process. Healthcare organizations and health plans are invited to participate in the CAQH Universal Credentialing DataSource, regardless of whether they are members of CAQH. If one of the health plans with which you work is not currently participating in the initiative, please ask them to visit the CAQH Website at www.CAQH.org or call (202) 861-1492.

Who do I contact for administrative support questions when utilizing the database?

CAQH provides a toll-free telephone service Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EST) to provide assistance with any questions you may have.