

# Joint Commission acceptance of AAPA physician assistant data



Not for distribution.  
Content is under review.

## **Primary-source-reported information in the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) Masterfile meets the Joint Commission equivalent source requirements and the principles for evaluating external credentialing agencies (CVOs) and sources.**

The AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile has been deemed by the Joint Commission as an equivalent source for physician assistant education and National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) certification.

The AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile also contains other information, such as state licensure, and use of this additional information by the Joint Commission-accredited healthcare organization to credential physician assistants is subject to the “The Joint Commission Principles for Evaluating External Credentialing Agencies (CVOs) and Sources.”

The following is the AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile response to these Joint Commission principles. Since the education and NCCPA information are deemed ‘equivalent’ sources, they are not subject to these principles but have been included in these responses to provide additional information to the user.

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

### *AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile response:*

A “sample” AAPA Physician Assistant profile is posted on the AMA Physician Profile Service web site ([www.ama-assn.org/go/amaprofiles](http://www.ama-assn.org/go/amaprofiles)). The AMA Physician Profile web site is the exclusive outlet for the AAPA Physician Assistant Profile.

All of the physician assistant information included on the AAPA Physician Assistant Profile is from a primary source except current practice data such as name, address, and self-designated practice specialty. The sources of the primary source data are as follows:

- Physician Assistant Education Programs
- National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)
- State Licensing Boards

2. The agency provides documentation to the user describing how its data collection, information and development, and verification process(es) are performed.

### *AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Response:*

The document entitled *The Description of AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Data* posted on the AMA Profile Service website ([ama-assn.org/go/amaprofiles](http://ama-assn.org/go/amaprofiles)) provides detailed information on how the data in AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile are collected, maintained and verified. To access this document on the site, click on the GO button next to “Profile Fee, Delivery and Accreditation Information.”

3. The user is provided with sufficient, clear information on database functions. This information includes any limitations on information available from the agency (for example, practitioners not included in the database); the time frame for agency responses to requests for information; and a



summary overview of quality control processes related to data integrity, security, transmission accuracy, and technical specifications

*AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Response:*

The *Description of AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Data* document describes the population to include all individuals that are enrolled in a PA program and individuals that have completed requirements to practice as a physician assistant in the United States. The AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile includes primary source information for both members and nonmembers of the AAPA.

While the AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile information is comprehensive, a limitation does exist regarding state licensure sanctions. Final disciplinary actions taken by a licensing board pertaining to PAs are not included on the AAPA Physician Assistant Profile. The users of the AAPA Physician Assistant Profile are encouraged to contact the state licensing boards listed on the AAPA Physician Assistant Profile to see if more information is available.

The timeframe for response to a request for an AAPA Physician Assistant Profile is clearly stated on the AMA Profile Service website ([ama-assn.org/go/amaprofiles](http://ama-assn.org/go/amaprofiles)) and on printed order forms. Orders for AAPA Physician Assistant Profiles must be placed online and are delivered back to the user online within minutes.

4. The user and agency agree upon the format for the transmission of the information about an individual, whether from the agency's database or from a primary source.

*AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Response:*

The format for transmission of information is the AAPA Physician Assistant Profile. All information on the AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile has been obtained or verified by those institutional sources that confer credentials. Physician assistants provide the current practice data, such as name, office address and self-designated practice specialty. The AAPA Physician Assistant Profile is ordered and retrieved exclusively through a pre-approved, password-protected customer account housed in the AMA Physician Profile Service website. The AAPA Physician Assistant Profile is delivered to the customer's account in an unalterable PDF document.

5. The user can immediately tell whether the information transmitted by the agency from a primary source is all the primary source information in the agency's possession and, if not, where additional information can be obtained.

*AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Response:*

All of the information on the AAPA Physician Assistant Profile is from the primary source except a few selected data elements that the physician assistant provides (name, address, practice setting, etc.). The education, NCCPA and state licensure data are gathered directly from the source. The AAPA Physician Assistant Profile contains all of the primary source information that is received from the primary source. No additional information is withheld from the user. However, the user is encouraged to contact the state licensing boards directly as they may provide additional information (such as sanctions) that is not included in the AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile.

6. For transmitted information that can go out of date (e.g., licensure, board certification), the date the information was last updated from the primary source is provided.

*AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Response:*

The AAPA Physician Assistant Profile provides the “Last Reported to the AAPA” date for the NCCPA Certification and State Licensure information.

- 7&8. The agency certifies that the information transmitted to the user accurately represents that information obtained from the primary source and, unless otherwise specified, completely represents the information obtained from the primary source.

*AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Response:*

The information at the top of the AAPA Physician Assistant Profile is clearly identified as being provided by the physician assistant or the AAPA. The data provided directly from the physician assistant are name, address, birthdate, major professional activity, clinical work setting, and self-designated practice specialty

The rest of the data on the AAPA Physician Assistant Profile is from the primary sources (education programs, NCCPA, state licensing boards) and is clearly delineated by the heading “The information beyond this point is provided by the primary source (not the physician assistant).”

The AAPA certifies that the primary source information is accurate as of the “last reported to the AAPA date” for the NCCPA certification and state licensure. The education information is current as of the graduation date listed. The AAPA Physician Assistant Profile provides all information received from the primary source as of the date and time printed on the bottom of the profile (this is the date and time that the profile was delivered to the user).

Other statements of accuracy and verification are described in the *Description of AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Data*” document.

9. The user can engage the quality control processes of the agency, including those for maintaining the integrity of the data, for accurately transmitting the data, and for representing the data’s completeness.

*AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Response:*

The *Description of AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Data* document describes the process of obtaining and maintaining data from the PA education programs, NCCPA and state licensing boards.

In addition, users of the AAPA Physician Assistant Profile may report any discrepancies in the information on the profile. Based on the user request, the AAPA will investigate and go back to the primary source to clear up the discrepancy.

After a discrepancy request, the user may download a new updated version of the profile in question for up to 60 days.

10. The user has a formal arrangement with the CVO for communication of any changes in credentialing information.

*AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Response:*

The credentialing information on the AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile is refreshed by the primary source on the following schedule:

Education: Annually until the PA successfully completes the education program.

NCCPA: Updated quarterly and includes initial year granted and certification status. To maintain certification, the Physician Assistant must be recertified every six years.

Licensure: The licensure information is updated no less than every 180 days (every 90 days in most cases) and the expiration date of the license is provided on the profile.

The *Description of AAPA Physician Assistant Masterfile Data* document is posted on the AMA Profile Service website and in information packets sent to users. These documents inform the user of how often the information is updated, how to interpret the last reported date, and briefs the user on how dynamic the information is (i.e., NCCPA recertification every six years). This information informs and alerts the user to when a particular data element may need to be re-verified for the physician assistant.