



AMA Program offers physicians a choice when it comes to prescribing data

**Q & A with American Medical Association President-elect
Jeremy A. Lazarus, MD**

Q: What is the AMA Physician Data Restriction Program and how is it benefiting physicians?

The American Medical Association (AMA) Physician Data Restriction Program (PDRP) offers physicians the option to withhold their prescribing data from pharmaceutical sales representatives while still making it available for medical research purposes. The program also allows physicians to register complaints against sales representatives or pharmaceutical companies who they believe are using their prescribing data inappropriately.

The PDRP is available to **all physicians**, both AMA members and nonmembers, and we're pleased to offer it as a way to give physicians a choice about the accessibility of their prescribing data.

Q: Does the AMA collect prescribing data or provide data to pharmaceutical companies?

No, the AMA does not collect, license, sell or have access to physician prescribing data. Health care information organizations (HIOs) collect and compile physician prescribing data and sell it to pharmaceutical companies. The AMA does, however, license physician demographic data to HIOs.

Q: Why did the AMA launch the PDRP?

A few years ago, the AMA became aware that some physicians had concerns regarding the inappropriate use of their prescribing data by pharmaceutical sales representatives. As the nation's largest physician advocate, the AMA conducted a Gallup survey of physician attitudes regarding the use of physician prescribing data by pharmaceutical companies. Through that survey, we found that the majority (84 percent) of physicians said either they were not concerned about the release of prescribing data or that the ability to opt out of the release of their data

to pharmaceutical sales representatives would alleviate their concerns. In response to these findings, the AMA created the PDRP, launched in 2006, to provide physicians the option to restrict pharmaceutical sales representatives from accessing their prescribing data.

Q: How are physicians responding to the PDRP?

We are proud to say that the PDRP is working very well and is meeting the needs of participating physicians. Of the physicians who expressed an opinion about the PDRP in a market research study, 96 percent were either satisfied or very satisfied with the program. This high level of satisfaction resulted in more than half (56 percent) of respondents telling a colleague about the program.

Q: Are pharmaceutical companies obligated to adhere to the PDRP?

Through licensing agreements with HIOs, the AMA can impact how the HIOs and their clients use prescribing data. These licensing contracts require the pharmaceutical companies to honor PDRP physician opt-outs. Companies found to be in violation could lose access to AMA data altogether.

Q: Does a PDRP registration expire after a certain number of years?

No, when physicians register for PDRP, their data is restricted indefinitely unless they elect at a later date to remove their registration.

Q: How long does it take for a physician's PDRP registration to become effective?

Companies have up to 90 days to comply but most process physician PDRP restrictions on a monthly basis.

AMA Program offers physicians a choice when it comes to prescribing data

Q: Will physicians stop receiving visits from pharmaceutical sales reps if they register for PDRP?

Restricting the use of prescribing data will not prohibit pharmaceutical sales reps from calling on physicians. The number of sales calls may increase or decrease as a result of reps no longer having access to physician prescribing preferences.

Q: Does the 2011 Supreme Court decision in *Sorrell v. IMS Health* affect a physician's option to register for PDRP?

The court ruling has no impact on the PDRP. Physicians can register for the program at any time. The June 2011 U.S. Supreme Court ruling struck down a Vermont law restricting the use of prescribing data for marketing purposes. The AMA believes that every physician should have the ability to decide whether his or her individual prescribing data is shielded from pharmaceutical detailers. PDRP provides this choice to physicians.

Q: Are prescriber data used for non-commercial purposes?

A. Yes, the AMA Therapeutic Insights program is a good example. AMA Therapeutic Insights is an online program that allows physicians from participating states to view their own prescribing data* (supplied by an outside health care organization) for featured conditions. Physicians can then compare their prescribing patterns against what is being prescribed at the state, national and specialty levels. Prescriber data are also used by government and others for things such as medical research, risk evaluation and mitigation strategy programs set forth by the Food and Drug Administration, and drug recalls. Further, there is a strong argument to be made that prescriber data helps the health care industry to expedite new and better treatments to the targeted populations that are in dire need of such medications.

Q. How does the AMA promote PDRP?

The AMA promotes PDRP to both AMA members and nonmembers. More than 500,000 physicians in each of the last three years have received information on the PDRP. Since its inception, PDRP has been advertised in medical and specialty journals and has been featured in AMA electronic vehicles numerous times.

Q: How can physicians register for the PDRP?

Registration is simple and convenient. To enroll in the PDRP, visit ama-assn.org/go/prescribingdata or call the AMA at (800) 621-8335.

Visit ama-assn.org/go/prescribingdata to learn more about the PDRP.

Visit ama-assn.org/go/therapeuticinsights to learn more about the AMA Therapeutic Insights program.

*The AMA does not collect, compile or have access to individual physician prescribing data. Through contracts with health care information organizations, the AMA can impact how prescribing data are used.

