



AMA program helps protect doctors' prescribing information

Q & A with American Medical Association Board of Trustees member Jeremy A. Lazarus, MD

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

A: 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?

A: 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: 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?

A: 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 recent 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?

A: Through licensing agreements with HIOs, the AMA can exert influence over 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?

A: When the program was originally launched in 2006, renewals were required after a certain timeframe. This is NO LONGER the case (as of 2007). Now,

when physicians register for PDRP their data is restricted indefinitely unless a physician decides to reverse the registration at some point.

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

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

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

A: 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: How can physicians register for the PDRP?

A: To enroll in the PDRP, visit www.ama-assn.org/go/prescribingdata or call the AMA at (800) 621-8335.