



## Physician Compare Administrative Data Fact Sheet

### Where does Physician Compare get the information displayed on the website?

Primary information is from the Provider Enrollment, Chain, and Ownership System (PECOS) and verified with Medicare Fee-for-Service (FFS) claims. This includes:

#### For Individual Health Care Professionals:

- ❖ First and Last Name
- ❖ Specialty
- ❖ Group practice affiliation
- ❖ Addresses/phone numbers
- ❖ Medicare Assignment status
- ❖ Gender
- ❖ Education

#### For Group Practices:

- ❖ Legal Business Name and/or Doing Business As (DBA) name, if applicable
- ❖ Practice locations
- ❖ Addresses/phone numbers
- ❖ Affiliated health care professionals
- ❖ Specialties
- ❖ Medicare Assignment status

Additional information is from a variety of sources. Specifically,

- ❖ American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Board Certification and Residency information is obtained from a database compiled by Elsevier in cooperation with the American Board of Medical Specialties.
- ❖ Hospital Affiliation is generated from Medicare FFS claims.

### Are all individual health care professionals and group practices listed on Physician Compare?

No, not every individual and group practice in PECOS is included on Physician Compare. In order to be included on the site, the following must apply:

#### Individual Health Care Professionals must:

- ❖ Be in approved status in PECOS
- ❖ Provide at least one practice location address
- ❖ Have at least one specialty noted in PECOS
- ❖ Have submitted a Medicare claim within the last 12 months or be newly enrolled in PECOS within the last 6 months

#### Group Practices must:

- ❖ Be an approved Medicare provider
- ❖ Have a Legal Business Name\*
- ❖ Have a valid mailing address
- ❖ Have a Tax Identification Number (TIN)
- ❖ Have at least two health care professionals submit a Medicare claim under the group's TIN within the last 12 months or be newly enrolled in PECOS within the last 6 months

*NOTE: A group is required to have a legal business name to be included on Physician Compare; however, we strongly recommend that group practices update their information to include a "Doing Business As" name as this will make it easier for users to locate the practice on the site. Groups can update this information using [Internet-based PECOS](#).*

### How does Physician Compare determine group practice affiliation?

An individual health care professional taking part in Medicare can reassign their benefits to a group practice TIN. Physician Compare takes this information from PECOS and cross-references it with Medicare FFS claims to ensure the professional is currently billing to the TIN. A group practice affiliation will only be listed on the site if:

- ❖ There was at least one claim filed in the past year with the health care professional and group practice's NPI/TIN combination, OR
- ❖ It was created in the last 6 months, AND
- ❖ Both the health care professional that reassigned their benefits and the group are in "approved" status.

*NOTE: When an individual reassigns their benefits to a new group practice, it **does not** automatically remove their affiliation with the previous practice. We strongly recommend that individual professionals terminate their assignment with previous group practices in PECOS. For more information about how to update your information in PECOS, please view [Ensuring Accurate Information on Physician Compare](#).*

## How does Physician Compare determine practice locations?

### If the individual health care professional is part of a group practice:

- ❖ Physician Compare uses PECOS as the primary source for address information as it is the sole verified source of Medicare information. When an individual health care professional reassigns their benefits to a group TIN, the addresses noted as practice locations for that group will be associated with that individual. In order to further refine this list, individuals have the opportunity to log into [Internet-based PECOS](#), review all the verified addresses for that group practice, and identify both a Primary and Secondary practice location.
- ❖ If a Primary and Secondary practice location is not identified in PECOS, Physician Compare will cross-reference all available PECOS locations against Medicare claims submitted in the previous 12 months. Only those practice locations in PECOS that match a 9- or 5-digit ZIP code included on claims will be displayed on Physician Compare.

### If the individual health care professional is a solo practitioner:

- ❖ Practice location for solo practitioners is taken from the individual's PECOS enrollment. If multiple practice locations are listed, only claims-confirmed or locations entered in PECOS within the last 6 months will be included on Physician Compare.

## How are specialties designated on Physician Compare?

- ❖ Primary and secondary specialties are designated by the individual professional when they enroll in Medicare. Since the underlying database for Physician Compare is PECOS, we are restricted to listing specialties as they appear on the 855i Medicare Enrollment Form.
- ❖ Physician Compare will display one primary and up to three secondary specialties on an individual professional's profile page. If primary and secondary specialty information is not correct on Physician Compare, we recommend updating this information using [Internet-based PECOS](#). For more information about how to update this information in PECOS, please view [Ensuring Accurate Information on Physician Compare](#).

## How does Physician Compare determine Medicare Assignment status?

Both group practices and individual health care professionals identify their Medicare Assignment status when they enroll in Medicare.

- ❖ If the individual is a **solo practitioner**, their Medicare Assignment status is determined by what they selected in PECOS or what they noted in their Medicare Participating Physician Agreement form.
- ❖ If the individual is a **member of a group practice**, then the following rules apply:
  - If the individual and their group practice(s) have the same assignment status, then that status will be displayed on the individual's profile page.
  - If the individual does not indicate an assignment status but reassigns their benefits to a group that does accept Medicare Assignment, then an "Accepts Medicare Assignment" icon is placed on their profile page.
  - If the individual indicates he/she accepts Medicare Assignment and reassigns their benefits to a group that does not accept assignment, then a "May Accept Medicare Assignment" icon is displayed on their profile page.
    - For all groups and professionals that have a "May Accept Medicare Assignment" icon, the website encourages beneficiaries to call and confirm this status before seeking any services.
- ❖ If an individual is **both a solo and group practitioner** with conflicting assignment statuses, then "May Accept Medicare Assignment" is displayed on their profile page.

*NOTE: Changes in participation status can only be made during the open enrollment period, which is generally from mid-November through December 31. Contact your MAC/carrier to get the exact dates the participation agreement will be accepted.*

## What should an individual health care professional or group practice do if they notice errors on Physician Compare?

- ❖ PECOS information errors can be updated using [Internet-based PECOS](#).
- ❖ All other errors can be reported to the Physician Compare Support team at [PhysicianCompare@Westat.com](mailto:PhysicianCompare@Westat.com).