**Journeying through APIs**

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**Introduction**:

When digging through API documentation for source data for a project there are times when you find exactly what you are looking for – the perfect data to put together a database with all the information you need and want to work with. However, there are times when you think you have done this, only to discover that the APIs have been retired and are no longer available. This was the beginning of the journey I didn’t realize I was going to take while going through this project.

The original APIs I had found were stored within what I didn’t realize was the [*old* website](https://data.cms.gov/provider-data) for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) data. I had found a [Preventative Medicine Office Visit Costs](https://data.cms.gov/provider-data/dataset/0330-b6e0) dataset that peaked my interest that I had intended to combine with a [National Downloadable File](https://data.cms.gov/provider-data/dataset/mj5m-pzi6) regarding provider-level information. From here, I was going to use a postal code and state related API to provide as a link for the two CMS APIs so I would have a solid basis to dig into whether there could be a link between the number of providers available in any given area and the cost of preventative medicine for that area. However, as I worked through trying to set up the APIs to collect the data I was hoping to gather from these datasets, I noticed that I couldn’t seem to pull any data out of the CMS-related sources. I went digging for some documentation on why this might be and discovered CMS had hidden an important bit of information: *“The Public Dataset Endpoints on data.cms.gov have undergone a major overhaul and upgrade in the process of the recent migration of the platform on July 21, 2021 at 3 PM EST.”*1 The data I was looking to use was no longer available to use from the original CMS source and had yet to be re-published to the [new CMS data](https://data.cms.gov/search) storage website.

Through this process I learned a valuable lesson regarding the use of publicly available APIs: sometimes you will hit dead ends and you must learn to adapt and pivot to find additional data sources to suit your needs, even if it means going almost all the way back to square one. [Insert a witty segue into what data I am actually going to use for this project here.]

Citations:

1 *Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Data API*. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Data. (n.d.). https://data.cms.gov/api-docs