

ONLINE:

CMS Open Payment payment datasets:

<https://openpaymentsdata.cms.gov/datasets>

- Data Table
- Overview
- Data Dictionary available
- API available

National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPES):

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/regulations-guidance/administrative-simplification/data-dissemination>

API available, documentation at: <https://npiregistry.cms.hhs.gov/api-page>

SERVER: *also see 'Dataset Definitions' on Google Drive*

Server (MySQL) Databases: open_payments and open_payments_ref

'open_payments' database tables:

CMS' Open Payments began collecting data in 2013. Three types of payments are tracked:

- General -- An **Open Payments General payment** is a transfer of value (like consulting fees, meals, travel, or honoraria) that drug and device manufacturers make to a physician or teaching hospital, outside of research or ownership interests.
- Research -- An **Open Payments Research payment** is a transfer of value provided by drug or device manufacturers to physicians or teaching hospitals specifically in connection with a research agreement or study protocol.
- Ownership -- An **Open Payments Ownership/Investment Interest** refers to the value associated with a physician's or their immediate family member's ownership or investment in a drug, device, biologic, or medical supply manufacturer, including dividends, profit distributions, or stock ownership.

The server has a MySQL database (open_payments) with the last 5 years of General, Research and Ownership payments loaded for your convenience:

GENERAL PAYMENTS tables:

- OP_GNRL_2020 (NOTE the smaller number of records due to COVID-19 outbreak)
- OP_GNRL_2021
- OP_GNRL_2022
- OP_GNRL_2023

- OP_GNRL_2024

OWNERSHIP PAYMENTS tables:

- OP_OWNRSH_2020
- OP_OWNRSH_2021
- OP_OWNRSH_2022
- OP_OWNRSH_2023
- OP_OWNRSH_2024

RESEARCH PAYMENTS tables:

- OP_RSRCH_2020
 - OP_RSRCH_2021
 - OP_RSRCH_2022
 - OP_RSRCH_2023
 - OP_RSRCH_2024
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‘open_payments_ref’ database tables:

nppes -- CMS’ National Plan and Providers Enumeration Systems (registered Health Care Providers)

vpl -- CMS’ Verified Physicians List -- physicians with known NPIs

What VPL Includes:

CMS follows the **Social Security Act definition of “physician”** (Section 1861(r)). That means it **does not include every NPI holder**, only these five categories:

1. **Doctors of Medicine (MDs)**
2. **Doctors of Osteopathy (DOs)**
3. **Doctors of Dentistry or Dental Surgery (DDS, DMD)**
4. **Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs)**
5. **Doctors of Optometry (ODs)**
6. **Chiropractors (DCs)**

Key Notes

- The VPL **excludes** nurse practitioners, physician assistants, CRNAs, etc. (those belong in the NPPL).
 - The VPL is **not just anyone with an NPI** — it is a **curated and verified list** by CMS, meant to prevent misreporting by manufacturers/GPOs.
 - The list is refreshed annually and reflects the physicians who are active and should be considered “covered recipients” for Open Payments reporting.
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vpl_noNPI -- same as the CMS' Verified Physicians List - but without (known) NPIs

nppl -- CMS' National Practitioner and Provider Lookup -- those with (known) NPIs

What NPPL Includes:

- It is the official dataset of **teaching hospitals and non-physician practitioner types** that are “covered recipients” under Open Payments.
 - Examples of non-physician practitioners (NPPs) included are:
 - Physician Assistants (PAs)
 - Nurse Practitioners (NPs)
 - Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs)
 - Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs)
 - Anesthesiologist Assistants (AAs)
 - **NOTE the absence of Registered Nurses (RNs) -- not reportable**
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nppl_noNPI -- same as the CMS' National Practitioner and Provider Lookup - but without (known) NPIs

teaching_hospitals -- CMS' list of reportable Teaching Hospitals -- CMS uses a **funding-based definition** tied to Medicare.

Criteria for a Teaching Hospital to Appear on CMS' List

A hospital will appear on CMS' annual “**Teaching Hospital List**” if it meets **either** of these criteria in the most recent fiscal year:

1. **Receives Medicare direct graduate medical education (DGME) payments**, or
2. **Receives Medicare indirect medical education (IME) payments** (through the inpatient prospective payment system).

In other words:

- If Medicare is paying the hospital **to train residents** (DGME), or
- If Medicare is paying the hospital **extra reimbursement because it trains residents** (IME),

...it is officially designated as a **Teaching Hospital** for Open Payments reporting.

unified_physician_view -- The **unified_physician_view** is a consolidated reference view that merges data from NPPEs, the CMS Verified Physicians List (VPL), the Non-Physician Practitioner List (NPPL), and their no-NPI counterparts. It standardizes key fields like first name, last name, initials, state, and NPI so you can search across all datasets in one place.

NOTE - this view/table is only made from the primary first name, last name and state information - vpl, nppl, vpl_noNPI, nppl_noNPI can contain many instances of first and last names. Think about when a physician gets married and takes their spouses' last name.