CAQH Q&A

Q: What is the CAQH Universal Credentialing DataSource® (UCD)?

A: UCD is an online service and supporting standard application form that allows physicians and other health professionals in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to enter their credentialing information free of charge into a secure national database. The UCD application meets the provider data-collection needs of health plans, hospitals and other healthcare organizations.

UCD streamlines the initial application and re-credentialing processes, and offers health plans and networks real-time access to reliable provider information for claims processing, quality assurance and member services, such as provider directories and referrals.

Q: What is the Difference Between the UCD Service and the Paper UCD Application Form?

A: The UCD service is a secure, online process for collecting data from physicians and other healthcare professionals. UCD makes the data entry process simpler by employing an interview-style interface that asks questions in a logical order and automatically presents related questions based on previous answers. The online interface also uses extensive error checking to insure that omissions and similar errors are identified at time of entry.

The paper application form collects exactly the same information in the same order as the UCD service. CAQH created the paper application form for providers who do not have internet access or prefer to fax in their information.

The electronic and paper versions of the UCD application meets the data-collection requirements of the URAC, the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and Joint Commission standards.

Q: Who is Using the UCD?

A: Nearly 600,000 physicians and other healthcare professionals in all 50 states and the District of Columbia are using the UCD to store, manage and distribute their information to the health plans, hospitals and managed care organizations of their choice. More than 400 health plans, hospitals and managed care organizations are participating in and receiving provider data through the UCD service.

Q: Who supports the UCD Service and Form?

A: State Support: In addition to Ohio, several states and the District of Columbia have adopted the UCD application as their mandated or designated provider credentialing form. These include: Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Vermont. Additional states are expected to mandate, support and/or adopt the CAQH application in 2008. In addition, several state Medicaid agencies are exploring participating in UCD.

Additionally, the Vermont Hospital Association recently entered into an agreement with CAQH that allows its members to use the UCD online service at a reduced cost.

Industry Support: UCD is supported by America's Health Insurance Plans, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Physicians, the American Health Information Management Association, the American Medical Association, the Healthcare Administrative Simplification Coalition, the Medical Group Management Association and other provider organizations.

Q: Who Controls the Data in the UCD Service?

A: All data submitted by providers through the UCD online service or paper application is maintained by CAQH in a state-of-the-art data center. Providers maintain control of their data at all times. Only they are able to create, add to, change or delete their information through the service.

Further, participating organizations must receive authorization from a provider to access his or her information.

Q: What is CAQH's Role in Provider Credentialing?

A: CAQH owns, updates and maintains the UCD service and the provider application form. Additionally, CAQH makes certain providers in states with a standard form different than the UCD form can submit their information through the UCD service. As such, CAQH plays a significant role in collecting data that can be used for provider credentialing.

However, CAQH is not a credentialing verification organization. Each UCD-participating organization must still perform primary source verification and follow its own internal rules as required.

Q: What is CAQH?

A: CAQH is a nonprofit alliance of health plans and trade associations working in collaboration on initiatives that simplify healthcare administration for health plans and providers, resulting in a better care experience for patients and caregivers.

CAQH member organizations are healthcare industry leaders covering more than 100 million Americans.

Q: What Does CAQH do?

A: Through CAQH, member organizations identify and implement initiatives aimed at eliminating unnecessary redundancy and administrative burden. CAQH and its members are working to achieve a healthcare system in which administrative processes are efficient, predictable, and easily understood by patients, caregivers and providers. In this system, administrative and clinical data are integrated to effectively support the delivery of care.

CAQH is currently focused on improving patient insurance verification at or before the point of care through the Committee on Operating Rules for Information Exchange (CORE™), and streamlining provider data collection through the Universal Credentialing DataSource® (UCD).

Q: What do HB125 Standard Form Requirements Mean for Ohio Healthcare Providers?

A: HB125 requires all Ohio physicians to submit their credentialing data through the CAQH UCD application form (electronic or paper). All other providers (non-physicians) are required to use a standard form to be developed by the Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI).

Physician Providers
CAQH anticipates that the conversion from the current Ohio custom form to the CAQH standard form will be complete in September 2008. Until that time, providers will continue to receive their information on the Ohio custom form when printing through the UCD service.

Once the conversion is complete, CAQH will migrate all provider information previously submitted

through the Ohio custom form and stored in the UCD database to the CAQH UCD application form. Owing to formatting differences between the Ohio custom form and the CAQH UCD form, it is likely that a number of data elements will not transfer.

CAQH anticipates that providers with completed forms will be prompted to enter missing data elements that did not transfer during their next attestation period after the form conversion takes place. This one-time process should take no more than 30 minutes to complete.

Non-physician Providers
Once the ODI finalizes its standard form for all other providers, CAQH will begin programming the UCD service to accept that form. The programming process will be complete in approximately six months. At that time, Ohio non-physician providers will be able to submit their information to the ODI standard form through the UCD service.