

# UnitedHealthcare Physician Credentialing and Recredentialing Frequently Asked Questions

UnitedHealthcare utilizes the Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH) Universal Provider DataSource™ (UPD) for gathering credentialing data for physicians and other health care professionals. The CAQH UPD has been available free to physicians and health care providers since 2004. As of May 2011, more than 900,000 health care providers are actively using the UPD. This system enables physicians and other health care professionals to provide credentialing data to multiple health insurance companies through a streamlined process. UnitedHealthcare has implemented the CAQH process as our single-source credentialing application nationally. Given that there are currently more than 600 participating health plans, hospitals and health care organizations using the UPD, UnitedHealthcare believes that UPD will eliminate redundant applications with many of your contracted relationships. The end goal is to support administrative simplification within the credentialing process.

## Getting started

### What is credentialing?

The UnitedHealthcare credentialing and recredentialing process is an industry-standard systematic approach to the collection and verification of a practitioner applicant's professional qualifications. The assessment and verification of these qualifications helps to confirm that the practitioner meets certain criteria relating to professional competence and conduct in several areas; it also includes review of relevant training, licensure, certification, and/or registration to practice in a health care field, and academic background. The UnitedHealthcare credentialing process evaluates the qualifications of practitioners who seek to provide care for UnitedHealthcare members. The credentialing process is completed before a practitioner is accepted for participation in the UnitedHealthcare network. Recredentialing is conducted every three years after original credentialing to ensure professional qualifications remain valid and current.

Our credentialing standards are more extensive than, and fully compliant with, the National Committee on Quality Assurance (NCQA) requirements.

For more information about our credentialing and recredentialing process, please refer to our Credentialing and Recredentialing Plan available UnitedHealthcareOnline.com > Tools & Resources > Policies & Protocols > Credentialing and Recredentialing Plan

**Please note:** The CAQH process only pertains to the credentialing application. Contracting with UnitedHealthcare and its affiliates is a separate process. Participation in the UnitedHealthcare network requires an executed contract.

### Who do we contact to begin credentialing with UnitedHealthcare or its affiliates?

Simply call UnitedHealthcare at 877-842-3210, say or enter your Tax Identification Number (TIN), and then say, as prompted, Other Professional Services > Credentialing > Medical > Join the Network. You will then be transferred to a credentialing specialist who will ask you questions regarding your information in the Universal Provider DataSource. UnitedHealthcare will provide you with your CAQH ID number, allowing you to grant us access to your information.

If the system does not recognize your TIN, the credentialing specialist will work with you to create a new record to be loaded into our database and sent to CAQH for confirmation.

### How long is the credentialing process?

The credentialing process is the first part of contracting with UnitedHealthcare. Please allow 25-30 business days to complete the initial credentialing process, if a complete application is received. Once approved, written notification will be sent within three business days from the decision date.

If an application is missing pertinent information, UnitedHealthcare will notify the practitioner of incomplete information.

### Why should I use the UPD?

UnitedHealthcare is committed to streamlining the administrative process, and the UPD provides the following benefits to physicians:

- ▶ Eliminates redundancies in completing credentialing applications for multiple health plans
- ▶ Eliminates need to print and mail credentialing applications
- ▶ Reduces the need for costly credentialing software
- ▶ Minimizes paperwork by allowing physicians and other health care professionals to make updates online
- ▶ Provides for standardization and portability, enabling physicians and other health care professionals to easily and securely access their information



### What are my rights in credentialing?

Physicians and other health care professionals applying for the UnitedHealthcare network have the following rights regarding the credentialing process:

- ▶ To review the information submitted to support your credentialing application;
- ▶ To correct erroneous information; and
- ▶ To be informed of the status of your credentialing or recredentialing application, upon request.

### How do I check the status of a current credentialing application?

Call us toll-free at 877-842-3210, say or enter your TIN, and then say, as prompted, Other Professional Services > Credentialing > Medical > Get Status.

## Credentialing for physicians new to UnitedHealthcare

### What is the process if a physician or health care professional has never used or been entered into CAQH UPD?

A physician, health care professional or representative must start by contacting UnitedHealthcare and requesting to become a participating physician. The participation process begins with credentialing. If the practitioner is not found within CAQH's database, UnitedHealthcare collects pertinent physician or health care professional information and then adds the physician to our CAQH roster. This is done in real time and at the end of the call, the caller is given his/her CAQH ID number immediately and they may access the CAQH site as soon as the call ends. All physicians and other health care professionals who are **new** to CAQH are mailed a Welcome Kit, directly from CAQH within 24 hours of receiving the information from UnitedHealthcare. The kit includes detailed information on the CAQH process. *CAQH does not differentiate between credentialing and recredentialing as their process is the same.*

### What is the process if the physician or health care professional already has a CAQH ID and wants to become a participating physician with UnitedHealthcare?

If you **already have** an existing CAQH identification number **and** are already registered with CAQH, please contact UnitedHealthcare toll-free at 877-842-3210 say or enter your TIN, and then say, as prompted, Other Professional Services > Credentialing > Medical > Join the Network. You will then be transferred to a credentialing specialist who will ask you questions regarding your information in the Universal Provider DataSource. At this time, UnitedHealthcare will confirm your CAQH ID number. The purpose of this call is to notify UnitedHealthcare that you would like to be added to

their CAQH roster for credentialing.

After you have spoken with UnitedHealthcare, log in to the CAQH website at [caqh.org/cred](http://caqh.org/cred) and update your profile, authorizing UnitedHealthcare to access your data. When you complete your CAQH application for the first time, or upon successful reattestation, you will receive an auto-generated fax or email message from CAQH confirming your status change.

**Please note:** If the physician or health care professional is not new to CAQH, UnitedHealthcare still confirms and shares their CAQH number during the initial credentialing call.

### Will UnitedHealthcare release the CAQH ID to the physician?

Yes, the UnitedHealthcare Credentialing Call Center can release the new or existing CAQH ID to the physician, during the request for credentialing.

### How long does the credentialing application take, once the CAQH ID is created?

The length of time depends on how fast the physician or representative responds to the CAQH request to complete the application. CAQH does an initial outreach 60 business days after the Welcome Kit has been sent, if the application process has not been initiated.

### When can I start the credentialing process for a new provider?

If you are new to CAQH, please contact UnitedHealthcare to have a CAQH ID created (or contact another health plan to initiate the request; CAQH IDs can only be generated if the request comes from a participating organization). The credentialing request can commence more than 30 business days prior to your physician's start date. However, please ensure that all necessary parts of the application are available for completion, including malpractice insurance, Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) numbers and state licenses. If this information is not present, UnitedHealthcare cannot complete the credentialing process.

### Will UnitedHealthcare be able to provide me with my CAQH number if I forget it?

Yes, if you request to become credentialed with UnitedHealthcare but already participate in CAQH, UnitedHealthcare will be able to provide you with your CAQH number during your initial call.

### What are the steps in the full credentialing process for a new physician?

Our credentialing process includes a review for network need, primary source verification and our credentialing committee review. After receiving a completed application, we perform primary source verification. This portion of the

process takes approximately 21 business days to complete, depending upon response times from medical schools, residencies and specialty boards. Next, we present your request for participation to our credentialing committee. Once approved, we will require a signed contract from the physician (those physicians joining groups participating with UnitedHealthcare on a group contract will be added to the group contract). Once the contract is loaded into our systems, the physician will be notified in writing of the effective date.

For a full review of the requirements, please review the UnitedHealthcare Credentialing and Recredentialing Plan available online at [UnitedHealthcareOnline.com](http://UnitedHealthcareOnline.com) > Tools & Resources > Policies & Protocols > Credentialing and Recredentialing Plan

**Reminder:** In order to streamline the credentialing and contracting processing, UnitedHealthcare may also mail a contract to the requesting physician or health care provider within five business days of a request for credentialing. The receipt of a contract is not a confirmation of an approved credentialing application.

## CAQH Process Questions

### Must the entire CAQH Provider Data Collection Form be completed?

Yes, you are expected to complete all questions on the CAQH application. The electronic application will present the questions to you in an interview style approach, with logic that presents the questions that are relevant to your particular specialty or provider type. The system is designed to allow you to complete the application over time. You can stop any time, save what you have completed and return later to finish the process. The entire application must be completed prior to your verification of its accuracy, and before the participating health plans that you have authorized can access it.

If you are new to the CAQH UPD system, you will receive your CAQH outreach kit and CAQH ID number once you have requested credentialing with a UPD-participating health plan.

### How do physicians and other health care professionals control who can access their information?

In the third step to completing the CAQH UPD data-collection process, physicians and other health care professionals are required to indicate which participating health plans and health care organizations can access their data. Only organizations that they authorize can access their information.

In addition, the UPD Practice Manager Module allows office staff to assist physicians in completing or updating portions of the application by exporting practice location, hospital affiliation and liability information common to

a group. The Practice Manager may access this module by selecting the Practice Manager Module link below the sign-in boxes at <https://upd.caqh.org/pmm>.

### How can we submit supporting documents to CAQH as part of the application?

Supporting documents (e.g. professional liability insurance, state licenses, etc.) should be faxed to CAQH at 866-293-0414.

### Can I print a copy of my completed credentialing application?

Yes, once you have completed your CAQH application, the system allows you to print out a full copy of the credentialing application for your records.

### How can we contact CAQH for assistance with the Universal Provider Database?

UPD assistance is available online at [caqh.org](http://caqh.org), by email at [caqh.updhelp@acsgrs.com](mailto:caqh.updhelp@acsgrs.com) and by calling: 888-599-1771 (Monday through Thursday 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET; and Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET).

A list of frequently asked questions is available at [caqh.org/ucd\\_physician\\_faq.php](http://caqh.org/ucd_physician_faq.php) and an online tutorial is also available at [caqh.org/upd\\_tutorial.php](http://caqh.org/upd_tutorial.php).

### We want to avoid processing issues with credentialing or recredentialing. What are some common reasons that we may not be credentialed or recredentialed so that we can avoid them?

The UnitedHealthcare National Credentialing Center encourages you to ensure that:

- ▶ CAQH applications are complete and do not have an expired attestation status.
- ▶ All applications having current supporting documentation (e.g., DEA cert., liability coverage face sheet) and that nothing is expired.
- ▶ You are requesting credentialing only for those specialties in which you are trained (e.g., do not send in a request for pain management with a residency in anesthesia only).
- ▶ You have multiple in-network hospital privileges (primarily related to government programs).
- ▶ You have adequate liability coverage requirements.

## Recredentialing (new and existing physicians)

### Why do we have to complete recredentialing?

Rec credentialing is required every three years by the National Committee on Quality Assurance, which ensures that all health plans have the most up-to-date, accurate information about physicians' education and experience. It also allows you to review the contact information that we use in the Physician Directory available to your patients.

## How do we complete recredentialing with UnitedHealthcare?

If you have attested to all of the data in the Universal Provider DataSource on the regular interval required by CAQH, **you do not need to do anything**. UnitedHealthcare simply pulls your information from CAQH to review for updates and changes. However, if you have not reattested your information, you will need to review the following guidelines to assist you in a better understanding of UnitedHealthcare's outreach efforts in the process of recredentialing for all UnitedHealthcare products:

### Reattestation of CAQH UPD Information

You will receive automatic reminders from CAQH to review and attest to the accuracy of your data. Based on standards set by CAQH you must review and authorize data access once every four months. This is easily accomplished through a quick online visit or by calling the CAQH Help Desk at 888-599-1771. You can make changes to your record anytime by phone or online.

This quick and easy process ensures that the information UnitedHealthcare has on file for you is correct. If you keep this information up-to-date, UnitedHealthcare will only send you a notification letter at the start of the recredentialing process.

### To reattest:

1. Go online to [caqh.org/oas](http://caqh.org/oas) at least every four months.
2. Log in.
3. At "Start Page," select "Re-attest."
4. Run the Audit.
5. Review and update data as needed.
6. Click on "Attest."

### Does UnitedHealthcare send notifications for recredentialing reminders to its physicians?

Yes, UnitedHealthcare mails notifications to providers at the start of the recredentialing process to advise them of this requirement and let them know their current CAQH status. If additional action is needed this is referenced in the letter. Additional letters will continue to be sent, should the provider take no action.

## Related questions

### How do we submit demographic changes to UnitedHealthcare?

Demographic changes can be completed via phone, fax and online.



#### Phone:

Call us at 877-842-3210, say or enter your TIN, and then say, as prompted, Other Professional Services > Demographic Changes. You will be transferred to a Demographics Health Care Professional Services associate, who will assist you with these important changes.



#### Fax:

Please visit [UnitedHealthcareOnline.com](http://UnitedHealthcareOnline.com) > Most Visited > NPI > Tools & Resources > Physician and Provider Demographic Update Form to access the printable demographic form.

Follow the instructions on the form and fax to the appropriate fax number listed at the end of the form.



#### Online:

Please visit [UnitedHealthcareOnline.com](http://UnitedHealthcareOnline.com) > Select Practice/Facility Profile (*online registration required*) > Review and update your information.

Online updates are specific for demographic changes to place of service locations. If you require additional changes related to billing address, TIN changes or specialty designation please complete the demographic form or contact us at 877-842-3210.

### Why does board certification matter?

While current board certification is not a requirement for network participation, it is a required evaluation element for designation under the UnitedHealthcare Premium<sup>®</sup> program. Updated board certification is captured as part of the credentialing/recredentialing application.



Disclaimer: This document applies to physicians and health care professionals that require credentialing for participation in the UnitedHealthcare network. This is not applicable to physicians and health care professionals that are part of a delegated credentialing agreement.