CAQH® Online Application System - Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Who is CAQH?
CAQH is the Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare, Inc., a not-for-profit collaborative alliance of the nation’s leading health plans and networks. The mission of CAQH is to improve health care access and quality for patients and reduce administrative requirements for physicians and other health care providers and their office staffs. CAQH’s participating organizations provide health care coverage for more than 500 million Americans.

Q2. What is the CAQH Universal Provider Datasource® (UPD)?
The CAQH Universal Provider Datasource® (UPD) service is the industry standard for collecting provider data used in credentialing and member service resources, such as network directories and online Provider Finders. A single, standard online form—the CAQH application—is the centerpiece of the UPD service. Providers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia are able to enter their information free of charge through an interview-style process. Through its streamlined, electronic data collection process, CAQH is helping to reduce unnecessary paperwork while saving millions of dollars in annual administrative costs for more than 800,000 physicians and other health professionals, as well as more than 550 participating health plans, hospitals and health care organizations.

Q3. Is there a charge for providers to utilize CAQH?
No. Providers may utilize the UPD database at no cost.

Q4. Are Accrediting Bodies in support of the CAQH application?
Yes. The CAQH application (UPD form) meets the data-collection requirements of URAC, the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and the Joint Commission standards. Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, and the District of Columbia have adopted the CAQH standard form as their mandated or designated provider credentialing application.

Q5. Why did BCBSIL choose to work with CAQH?
BCBSIL chose to work with CAQH because the UPD database is a proven solution for simplifying administrative burdens placed on providers during the credentialing/re-credentialing process. The easy-to-use online data collection and application process means less paperwork for BCBSIL providers, with built-in auditing tools to help increase efficiency and maintain data security and integrity. BCBSIL also considered independent user studies further assessing the track-record of the UPD database.

Based on figures from a Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) cost analysis, CAQH estimates that the UPD database has already eliminated more than 2.4 million legacy-credentialing applications resulting in savings of $95 million per year or more than 3.2 million hours (the equivalent of 1,561 full-time employees) of provider and support staff time required to complete and send redundant application forms.
Q6  Am I required by BCBSIL to utilize the CAQH database?
Yes. All providers required to submit a credentialing or recredentialing application must utilize the UPD database.

Q7  I have been told my name must appear on the BCBSIL roster in order to input my information into the CAQH UPD. What does this mean?
When you apply for network participation, BCBSIL will add you to its roster with CAQH. If you do not have a CAQH ID number, CAQH will send you a registration letter with your ID. If you already have a CAQH ID and your information is complete and current and you have authorized BCBSIL, CAQH will provide your information to BCBSIL.

Q8  I am already a BCBSIL network provider and would like to get my information into CAQH. How do I do this?
If you already have a CAQH ID number, you may update your information at any time. BCBSIL will roster you in advance of your next recredentialing due date. If you do not have a CAQH ID number, CAQH will send you a registration letter with your ID.

Q9  How can I access the UPD database?
Once you are rostered by BCBSIL, access and registration instructions will be sent to you from CAQH. You will use a personal ID and password to obtain immediate access to the UPD database via the Internet. You may submit your completed application online and fax supporting documents to a specified toll-free fax number (866) 293-0414. If you have any questions on accessing the database, you may contact the CAQH Help Desk at (888) 599-1771 for assistance or you may send an e-mail to caqh.updhelp@acsgs.com.

Q10  Is the CAQH Universal Provider Datasource applicable in states where there is a state-mandated application?
Yes. In states where legislation has passed mandating the use of a standard credentialing application form, the data collected through CAQH and the UPD data collection process will include the data elements and/or form as is required by the state. The system will automatically ask the necessary questions to fulfill the requirements for the state in which the provider’s primary office address is located.

Q11  Will I be required to give BCBSIL information to supplement what I entered in the UPD database?
The primary goal of CAQH is to simplify the administrative process with a robust and streamlined data system. While the CAQH credentialing data set is substantially complete, BCBSIL may need to supplement, clarify, or confirm certain responses in the application with individual physicians and other health care providers on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, you may be required to provide supplemental documentation in some situations, in addition to the information you submit through the UPD database.
Q11 Can I use the UPD database to report any changes to my practice, such as address, phone numbers, and new providers?

BCBSIL has selected CAQH and the UPD database as its data collection source for credentialing and recredentialing applications. We will access the UPD database for your data at initial credentialing and during your scheduled recredentialing cycle every third year. You must continue to directly notify BCBSIL of any changes to your practice information or status.

Q12 How will my confidentiality be maintained within the CAQH database?

The confidentiality and security of provider information and the privacy of system users are critical priorities for CAQH. The UPD database design is compliant with laws, rules, and regulations relating to the privacy of individually identifiable health information. In addition, CAQH complies with applicable laws and regulations pertaining to confidentiality and security in development of the database and the data collection process. The UPD database is housed in the U.S. within a secure Network Operations Center. You may contact the CAQH Help Desk with additional questions by calling (888) 599-1771 or by e-mail caqh.updhelp@acsgs.com.

Q13 How often must my information be updated?

You will be sent automatic reminders to review and attest to the accuracy of your data. You must review and authorize data once every six (6) months. This is easily accomplished through a quick online visit https://upd.caqh.org/oas/ or by calling the CAQH Help Desk at (888) 599-1771 for assistance.

Q14 Why do I need to review and attest to my information two (2) times a year?

Because BCBSIL will be using this system for credentialing and recredentialing, it is important that the database contains the most accurate and up-to-date information. By reviewing and attesting to your data twice a year, you will enable BCBSIL to obtain current information from the database at the time of recredentialing or database updates, without having to contact you repeatedly. This will help you continue to conform to the requirements of your network contract.

Q15 Can any health plan access my data?

No. You control which health plan(s) have access to your CAQH application information. When completing the application, you will have the option of granting global access to your application data, or you may choose to select which participating health plan(s) and health care organization(s) you want to view your data.

Q16 Who will have access to my data?

Only the health plan(s) that you have authorized can access your application data.
Q17 Do I have to give you my Social Security Number?
Your Social Security Number is required to complete the application and will be used to verify your credentials.

Q18 How do I input my data if I do not have Internet access?
If you do not have Internet access, you may call the CAQH Help Desk at (888) 599-1771 and complete the application by telephone. Supporting documents may be faxed toll free to (866) 293-0414.

Q19 Are hearing/sight challenged persons able to use the CAQH database?
Yes. Hearing/sight challenged providers may call the CAQH Help Desk at (888) 599-1771 and complete the application by telephone. Supporting documents may be faxed toll free to (866) 293-0414.

Q20 Why is BCBSIL not listed on the Authorization Page?
The health plan(s) listed on the Authorization Page have submitted you on their CAQH provider roster. BCBSIL will add you to our CAQH provider roster upon receipt of a signed contract. If you have questions related to your application for participation with the BCBSIL provider networks, you should contact our Network Operations Department for assistance at (312) 653-6555.

Q21 Who do I contact for administrative support if I have questions when utilizing the database?
The CAQH Help Desk provides telephone service Monday through Thursday, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., CT, and Friday, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., CT, to assist with any questions you may have. You may reach the Help Desk by calling (888) 599-1771 or by e-mail caqh.updhelp@acsgs.com.