



Policies for the Review of Requests for Data and External Research Collaboration

NCCPA has a clear, strong interest in research related to the ongoing evaluation and improvement of its exams and certification program for physician assistants (PAs). NCCPA also has a robust repository of data on certified PA demographic and practice characteristics. NCCPA owns this data, and it is committed to sharing data in appropriate and ethical ways with others who would use it to further advance the health and safety of the public or otherwise conduct useful research relating to PAs.

NCCPA must consider its pursuit of and investment in research through the filter of its purpose and mission as a certifying organization, its obligation as stewards of the data collected, and the ultimate aim of advancing the health and safety of the public and maintaining appropriate criteria and standards for certification of PAs.

The purpose of this policy is to support and regulate the review of data requests from external investigators and the dispensation of data as follows:

1. NCCPA pursues a research agenda that focuses on its core activities and ongoing evaluation and improvement of its exams and certification program. All information collected, generated, and stored by NCCPA inform its operations and has alignment with the mission, vision, and goals of NCCPA.
2. The chair shall appoint a Research Collaboration Advisory Work Group to provide advice to staff on internal research initiatives and to review and make recommendations regarding requests for data from external investigators. The chair of the Board of Directors shall appoint members of the Advisory Work Group who have specific interest and expertise in research and issues impacting PAs and healthcare. At least one member of the Advisory Work Group must be an NCCPA Board member; other members may be NCCPA staff or other qualified individuals. Members of the Advisory Work Group who are not part of the NCCPA Board or staff will be required to sign appropriate agreements to ensure the confidentiality and security of NCCPA data and the integrity of the data request review process. The Advisory Work Group will meet at least once per quarter to review data requests that have been received by NCCPA, to advise staff on internal research initiatives, and to provide recommendations regarding potential revisions to NCCPA's research policy. Advisory Work Group members will be reimbursed or NCCPA will pay directly for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with participating in Advisory Work Group meetings in accordance with NCCPA's policies on expense reimbursement but shall not otherwise receive compensation for their participation, except for NCCPA staff to the extent required by law. The NCCPA CEO/President shall take the recommendations of the Advisory Work Group into consideration but has the authority delegated by the Board to accept or deny requests for data.
3. NCCPA shall create and maintain a repository of the categories of data collected from PAs or otherwise generated through its operations, the methods by which the data is collected or generated, the frequency with which the data is collected or generated, and the method by which the data is stored. This repository will serve as a resource when fielding requests from external investigators and to aid in effectively monitoring NCCPA's data collection strategies.

4. On an annual basis, NCCPA shall provide public access to portions of its data through various reports, tables and graphs that will be posted on NCCPA's website or disseminated through various other means, such as publications and presentations, to advance the health and safety of the public by furthering greater understanding of information about certified PAs, the standards for certification, and the role of certified PAs in the health care delivery system.
5. NCCPA will not report or share data that can be linked to an identifiable individual under any circumstance or to a specific organization without the consent of an appropriate representative of that organization; only aggregated, non-identifiable data will be reported or shared.
6. To protect the confidentiality and integrity of its data, any required analysis of approved data requests will be conducted internally by a member of NCCPA's research team, and resultant data tables will be provided to external investigators. NCCPA's research team will collaborate with the external investigators to determine the data required and the most appropriate analyses.
7. Any author of publications, manuscripts, reports, articles, presentations, or other published works that include NCCPA data not otherwise made available to the public must obtain approval by NCCPA prior to its dissemination. To ensure NCCPA data is appropriately represented, NCCPA requires that any published work using NCCPA-provided data, other than data made publicly available, include a member of NCCPA's staff or other NCCPA appointee as an author. Because authorship is required, the NCCPA staff or appointee will be involved in writing the manuscript. These conditions will be incorporated into any grant of a request for data. Requests for exceptions to the authorship requirement may be considered based on the nature and scope of the project.
8. NCCPA shall maintain ownership of all NCCPA data. External researchers may be granted a non-exclusive license to use NCCPA data, which shall be restricted to the purpose specified in the proposal. The data may not be disclosed to any other individual or entity or used for any other purposes or projects without prior written consent from NCCPA. Prior to receiving any NCCPA data not otherwise available to the public, the external investigator must execute appropriate data use agreements.
9. Although NCCPA is committed to sharing its data for research in support of its mission, depending on the extent of resources required to fulfill the request, the external investigator may be required to remit payment to cover the labor or administrative costs associated with preparing the data. NCCPA will determine the estimated cost of staff allocation and other resources required to provide the requested data and to conduct the required analysis to process data requests from external investigators.

Adopted: November 2014

Last Revised: May 2016