Sanction Screening Lists Most Used by Healthcare Providers in the US

Healthcare compliance leaders could save thousands of dollars and improve their programs – all by using artificial intelligence. Every healthcare compliance team understands that sanction screening is important and exclusion lists must be regularly checked. But which lists should they be focused on – and how can they check them all regularly to maintain compliance?

This article explores the most important exclusion lists for healthcare organizations in the United States. We explore the challenges and solutions compliance leaders face with these lists – and reveal how automated tools can simplify and scale your sanction screening program.

The 7 Most Common U.S. Healthcare Sanction Lists

Healthcare organizations must conduct sanction screenings using multiple databases to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations

1. Office of Inspector General's List of Excluded Individuals and Entities (OIG LEIE)

What is it?

The OIG LEIE is a federal database that identifies individuals and entities that have been excluded from participating in federally funded healthcare programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. The database is maintained by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and can be easily searched via an online portal.

Why is it important?

Most OIG exclusions are imposed due to serious offenses – from healthcare fraud to patient abuse. Regular OIG compliance checks are therefore vital to avoid:

- Financial Losses: The OIG can enforce penalties of up to $10,000 per violation for non-compliance. Organizations can also be stripped of their Medicare reimbursements and made ineligible for future payments.
- Patient Harm: Excluded individuals and entities present a serious risk to patient safety, often due to past misconduct or negligence. Allowing them to engage in patient care can directly compromise the quality, integrity, and safety of that care.

- Reputational Harm: Working with excluded parties can significantly harm your reputation, leading to patient churn and staff recruitment issues.

2. General Services Administration's System for Award Management (SAM)

What is it?

The U.S. General Service Administration's SAM is a federal database that tracks individuals and organizations that are prohibited from receiving government contracts. While SAM is not exclusively healthcare-focused, it includes exclusions that can impact healthcare organizations, particularly those working with federal agencies or receiving government funding.

Why is it important?

Like the OIG LEIE, most SAM exclusions are the result of serious misconduct, ranging from criminal convictions to unethical business practices. Rather than direct fines, working with excluded individuals may result in lost government contracts, civil action, or criminal charges.

3. State Medicaid Exclusion Lists

What are they?

State Medicaid exclusion lists are databases maintained by individual states that identify healthcare providers and organizations that have been barred from participating in state-funded healthcare programs. These function similarly to the OIG LEIE but are localized and may differ from the nationwide list kept by the OIG.

Why are they important?

Many individuals or entities are not included within the OIG LEIE – but are excluded at the state level. The same penalties can result from working with these parties, making additional state exclusion list checks essential for full compliance.

4. National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB)

What is it?

The National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) is a federal database managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that tracks malpractice claims, disciplinary actions, and medical license restrictions against healthcare providers. While not an exclusion list, it serves as a valuable tool for identifying providers with histories of professional misconduct.

Why is it important?

Screening the NPDB allows healthcare organizations to detect problematic providers before they are hired, reducing liability and maintaining high standards of care. Many organizations integrate NPDB screening into their hiring and credentialing processes to safeguard against professional misconduct and protect patients from potentially unqualified practitioners.

5. DEA Controlled Substances Act Registration Exclusions

What is it?

The DEA Controlled Substances Act Registration Exclusions list highlights healthcare providers who have lost their registration to prescribe or dispense controlled substances.

Why is it important?

DEA exclusions can occur due to violations such as illegal prescribing practices, drug-related criminal offenses, or regulatory non-compliance. Engaging with providers who have lost their authority to handle controlled substances can lead to legal penalties, reputational damage, and potential risks to patient safety.

6. World Bank and OFAC Sanctions Lists

What is it?

The World Bank and the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) maintain separate sanction lists that impact healthcare organizations operating internationally. The OFAC list includes individuals and entities involved in illegal activities such as fraud, money laundering, or terrorism, while the World Bank Debarred List restricts funding to organizations implicated in corruption or fraudulent activities related to global healthcare projects.

Why is it important?

International operations create a lot of compliance risk, especially for healthcare organizations that often have large and highly complex vendor networks. Screening these international lists is essential to ensure you do not engage with entities involved in illicit activities – and failure to do so can lead to legal action, financial penalties, and reputational harm.

7. Professional Licensing Boards & Medical Boards

What are they?

Professional Licensing Boards and Medical Boards maintain records of healthcare professionals who have had their licenses revoked, suspended, or restricted due to misconduct or violations of professional standards. Each state has its own licensing board, which governs the licensure and disciplinary actions of healthcare providers.

Why are they important?

Ensuring that all employees, contractors, and vendors hold valid professional credentials is essential for compliance and patient safety. Licensing actions may not immediately appear in federal databases, so organizations must check state medical boards to verify the status of healthcare professionals.

How to Make Sanction Screening More Efficient

Building sanction screening into your compliance program helps healthcare organizations stay safe and secure – from improving patient data security to avoiding six-figure fines. But given the volume of lists explored above, it's unsurprising that traditional manual methods have proven difficult to scale – leaving many organizations at serious risk of non-compliance.

Challenges of Manual Sanction Screening

The standard sanction screening involves searching public databases manually; this would be required for every individual and entity. But this creates massive inefficiencies:

- Prone to Human Error: Manual checks can overlook a sanctioned individual due to typos or outdated records, which can result in compliance violations. Many individuals have multiple names, all of which must be checked to thoroughly screen them; equally, many common names may appear in lists – but could not be the individual with whom you are dealing.

- Time Intensive: Manually searching multiple databases for exclusions requires significant time and effort. This is especially true given that most searches will require multiple verifications to avoid false positives and ensure the right course of action is taken.
- Frequency of Change: Screening is never a "one and done" task; compliance with federal and state regulations requires regular checks to ensure you are not unwittingly employing excluded individuals. For example, the OIG exclusion list is updated monthly, the General SAM list is revised annually, and other lists are changed ad hoc as new individuals or entities are added.

These issues have led many healthcare organizations to seek automated solutions that can scale their program and enable them to check all exclusion lists at least monthly - without demanding significant manual effort from their already-overworked teams.

The Role of Automated Sanction Screening Software

Automated sanction screening can save hours of manual effort each week, leveraging a range of powerful features:

- Database Integration: Healthcare compliance teams often struggle with the sheer number of exclusion lists that must be monitored, including OIG LEIE, SAM, and various state exclusion lists. Automating database integration eliminates these risks by continuously scanning multiple databases, ensuring that organizations always have the most up-to-date information on exclusions.
- Batch Processing: Many healthcare organizations work with thousands of employees, vendors, and contractors, making individual screenings a logistical nightmare. Batch processing enables organizations to screen large volumes of individuals and entities simultaneously, dramatically reducing the time and effort required for compliance checks.
- Automated Alerts: A common issue with manual screening is the delay in identifying newly sanctioned individuals, which can leave organizations exposed to compliance risks. Automated alert systems notify compliance teams immediately when a new exclusion is identified, allowing for swift corrective action before regulatory issues arise.
- Audit-Ready Reporting: Regulatory audits can be stressful, especially when documentation is incomplete or disorganized. Automated tools maintain comprehensive, detailed logs of all screenings, making it easy to generate reports that demonstrate due diligence during audits. This not only ensures regulatory compliance but also provides organizations with a structured process to handle potential investigations or disputes efficiently.

Ensure Compliance with Compliance Resource Center

Compliance Resource Center simplifies sanction screening with automated tools that eliminate manual errors and improve efficiency. Our software ensures up-to-date monitoring, batch processing, and audit-ready reports so your organization remains compliant without extra administrative burden.

Want to learn how to streamline your sanction screening process?

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