



## CMS releases open payments data to the public

October 6, 2014

On September 30, 2014, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [announced](#) the release of the first round of Open Payments data to the public. The data was published on the [CMS website](#) and contains over 4.4 million payments, totaling roughly \$3.5 billion, made by the health care industry to physicians and teaching hospitals during the last five months of 2013.

The release of the data was required to fulfill the Physician Payments Sunshine Act, a provision of the Affordable Care Act, which requires manufacturers of drugs, devices, and other medical supplies and group purchasing organizations to report payments to physicians for transfers of value of \$10 or more. These payments include items such as promotional speaking, consulting, meals, travel, educational items, research grants, and other gifts.

Health care manufacturers submitted the data to CMS this summer. CMS performed initial matching to aggregate the payments to a single physician or teaching hospital and organized the records into three categories: general payments, research payments, and physician ownership and investments. CMS was able to match payments to more than 546,600 physicians and 1,360 teaching hospitals. All of these payments have been added to the Open Payments database although over 40 percent of the records have not been fully identified due to concerns about some payment records.

The initial posting is only the first phase of the Open Payments program. Future releases of Open Payments data will cover the entire year, and the next release is scheduled for June 2015. Until that time, CMS expects to update the de-identified records and to expand the website to add additional tools for easier searches on criteria such as specialty, location, or types of payments received.

Financial ties among medical manufacturers' payment and health care providers are not necessarily improper. However, CMS hopes the Open Payments website will increase transparency of payments and provide the public with an opportunity to learn about the relationships between health care providers and pharmaceutical and device companies.



**Joshua M. Gilbert**  
Senior Associate  
Columbus  
614.227.7736  
[jgilbert@bricker.com](mailto:jgilbert@bricker.com)

