

# Maintenance of Master Patient Index -- Single Site or Enterprise (1997)

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## Background

An accurate master patient (person) index (MPI), whether in paper or electronic format, may be considered the most important resource in a healthcare facility because it is the link tracking patient, person, or member activity within an organization (or enterprise) and across patient care settings. The MPI is needed to:

- Accurately match persons being registered for care with their records
- Minimize duplicate records within a facility and across patient care settings
- Facilitate merging MPIs to create enterprise MPIs
- Facilitate links with clinical data repositories, pharmacies and outside laboratories and
- Facilitate access to longitudinal (lifetime) patient records

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) recommends that the responsibility for MPI maintenance (single site, facility within an enterprise, and enterprise) be centralized under the direction of health information management professionals. Employees responsible for MPI maintenance must be carefully trained, have adequate tools and procedures, and be supervised to ensure their consistent compliance with established guidelines.

## Definitions

- Algorithm -- Mathematical formula using a combination of weighted MPI data elements to determine the probability of MPI duplicate or overlap entries.
- Duplicate Entry/File -- More than one entry/file for the same patient or person or more than one patient or person for an identification number in a facility's MPI.
- Master Patient (Person) Index -- An index of patients, persons, members of healthcare plans, guarantors, physicians, healthcare practitioners, payers, employees, employers, or others. It may also be called an enterprise master patient index (EMPI), enterprise patient index (EPI), corporate person index (CPI), or another similar description. MPIs shared by two or more care centers may be considered an "enterprise," "corporate" or "multi-facility" MPI.
- Overlap Entries/Files -- More than one MPI entry/file for the same patient in two or more facilities within an enterprise.

NOTE: Duplicate entries may represent information capture errors while overlap entries do not.

	Single Site Facility	Facility within Enterprise	Enterprise
<b>Information Capture</b> <i>Ensure accurate data capture through <b>standardization</b> including the following:</i>			

Search criteria to register patients/persons	X	X	X
Use of suffixes, prefixes, aliases, nicknames, punctuation, titles, etc.	X	X	X
Definition of data elements	X	X	X
<b>MPI Maintenance</b> <i>Determine <b>responsibility</b> for the following:</i>			
Dedicated staff to support the <i>facility</i> MPI including determination of coverage needed	X	X	X
Updating and maintaining the <i>facility</i> MPI	X	X	
Updating and maintaining the <i>enterprise</i> MPI			X
Resolution of urgent errors (e.g., those that impact patient care) and non-urgent errors	X	X	X
Resolution of potential duplicates within the facility	X	X	
Resolution of missing or inconsistent data elements within the facility	X	X	
Updating facility MPI based on results of investigation for duplicates, inconsistent data elements, and MPI change reports	X	X	
Supporting enterprise MPI personnel in resolution of overlap entries and inconsistent data elements across facilities. Obtaining additional patient/person information as needed and if necessary, arranging to have records pulled at the facilities to compare records		X	
Reporting facility MPI changes to enterprise MPI personnel and counterparts at other facilities		X	
Resolution of potential duplicate and overlap entries and inconsistent core elements across facilities. For example, for potential errors that cannot be resolved by viewing the facility MPIs, calls should be made to a designated person at the sending facilities for additional patient information. If needed, arrangements should be made to have records pulled at the facilities to compare records. Then, the enterprise MPI should be updated based on results of the investigation			X
Reporting enterprise MPI changes to facilities			X
Monitoring unresolved issues list and working on open items to ensure their timely resolution			X
<b>Policies and Procedures Needed</b> <i>Establish in writing policies and procedures for MPI maintenance processes including those for resolution of the following:</i>			

Data capture, including search criteria to register patients/persons. AHIMA recommends person name, date of birth and gender as minimal search criteria. When available, AHIMA recommends place of birth and mother's maiden name as search criteria. In addition, facility policy or need may require the use of additional criteria	X	X	X
Use of suffixes (e.g., Jr., II, etc.), prefixes (e.g., Dr., Ms., etc.), aliases, nicknames, punctuation (e.g. hyphenated names, apostrophes, spaces, etc.), etc.	X	X	X
Duplicate entries within facility	X	X	
Overlap entries across facilities		X	X
Missing core elements within facility	X	X	
Inconsistent core elements of same patient/person within facility	X	X	
Inconsistent core elements of same patient/person <i>across</i> facilities		X	X
If applicable, entries that have been "auto-merged" or computer-merged	X	X	X
If applicable, physical merge of records for "auto-merged" or computer-merged entries	X	X	
Resolution of urgent errors (e.g. those that impact patient care) and non-urgent errors	X	X	X
Monitoring of issues or errors resolution	X	X	X
Reporting changes within the facility	X	X	
Reporting changes throughout the enterprise		X	X
Access to MPI as determined by need or policy	X		
Access to facility within enterprise MPI and/or enterprise MPI as determined by need or policy		X	X
<b>Reports Needed</b>			
Potential duplicate entries within facility	X	X	
Potential overlap entries across facilities		X	X

Missing core elements within facility	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Inconsistent core elements of same patient/person within facility	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Inconsistent core elements of same patient/person across facilities		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
If applicable, entries that have been "auto-merged" or computer-merged	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

## Related Practice Briefs

### Published by the American Health Information Management Association

Developing Information Capture Tools (March 1997)

Master Patient (Person) Index (MPI) Recommended Core Data Elements (July 1997)

Merging Master Patient (Person) Indexes (MPI) (September 1997)

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