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Important information related to NCHS survey participants under 18 years of age at the time of the survey

Child survey participants, NCHS survey participants under 18 years of age at the time of the survey, are considered linkage-eligible if consent is provided by their parent or guardian. Linkages to administrative data are conducted linking survey data to multiple years of administrative data. Consequently, child survey participants may be linked to administrative data that represent events that occurred when the child was under 18 years of age and may also be linked to administrative data that represent events that occurred when the child was 18 years of age or older. For example, a 15-year old who was a survey respondent in the 2005 NHIS can be linked to CMS data for 2007 and earlier years (during which time the child was less than 18 years of age), but would be 18 years of age or older in CMS data from 2008 (approximately) and later years. In accordance with recent NCHS Ethics Review Board (ERB) guidelines, we will no longer release linked administrative data for child survey participants if the administrative data was generated from program participation, claims or other events occurring on or after their 18th birthday. This practice applies to all analytic projects, whether they are conducted in the NCHS Research Data Center (RDC) or in collaboration with NCHS staff in-house. The linked mortality files are not affected by this change. While the number of child survey participants affected by this new guidance is likely small for most of our linkages, the recent linkage of NCHS surveys to the CMS Medicaid data potentially has a large number of child survey respondents linked to one or more years of Medicaid data collected after age 18.

To address the new guidance, revisions have been made to the feasibility files for the linked NCHS-Medicare, NCHS-Medicaid, and NCHS-Social Security Administration data. NCHS is updating its documentation, including online tables describing the numbers of linked respondents, for all linked data files. Although most of the existing documentation will remain on the NCHS webpage during these updates, analysts should be aware of this change when developing their RDC proposals. Analysts needing more information about potential sample sizes for RDC proposals or more information on this new guidance should contact the data linkage team (datalinkage@cdc.gov).