U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Center for Health Statistics
3311Toledo Road
Room 3409
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782

NHAMCS Endorsing Organizations

- American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)
- American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians (ACOEP)
- Emergency Nurses Association (ENA)
- Society of Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM)
- Society of Academic Emergency Anesthesia (SAMBA)
- The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)
- American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO)

Dear Administrator,

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) has been conducting the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS), an annual study of hospital-based outpatient care, since 1992. The purpose of this study is to collect information about the large portion of ambulatory care provided by hospital outpatient and emergency departments and ambulatory surgery locations throughout the United States. The information requested includes data about patient visits, and hospital and department characteristics.

Many organizations and leaders in the health care community, including those providing the enclosed letters of endorsement, have expressed their support and join me in urging your participation in this meaningful study. You may refuse to participate or choose not to answer any question at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Your participation in the study will be of no direct benefit to you or your hospital, however, it will ensure that hospitals like yours are represented in research that examines the utilization and provision of hospital-based ambulatory medical care services in the United States.

The study will be conducted in three phases using an electronic questionnaire and will focus on a sample of patient encounters during a randomly assigned 4-week reporting period. A representative of the Census Bureau, acting as our agent, will be calling you to schedule an appointment regarding the details of your participation.

During the first phase, the representative will conduct an interview with you or your designee that focuses on some of the characteristics of your hospital and the capabilities of your electronic health records system; it should take a little over an hour. For the second phase, each department administrator or their designee is interviewed to determine eligible ambulatory care service areas; it should take about 30 minutes. The final phase, which requires minimal input from your staff, is the abstraction of sampled patient encounters from your medical records. In the weeks following the completion of this study, some hospitals may be contacted again for a reabstraction study which is conducted as a quality control measure. This study, also voluntary, would involve only a fraction of the originally abstracted medical records.

NCHS employees and agents, including employees of the Census Bureau, comply with the requirements of Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42 United States Code 242m), the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA, Title 5 of Public Law 107-347), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. § 552a. In addition, NCHS complies with the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015. This law requires the federal government to protect federal computer networks by using computer security programs to identify cybersecurity risks like hacking, internet attacks, and other security weaknesses. If any cybersecurity risk is detected, the information system may be reviewed for specific threats by computer network experts working for the government (or contractors or agents who have governmental authority to do so).

If you have any questions regarding your participation, please call a NHAMCS representative at (800) 223-3815. Or, if you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research study, please call the NCHS Research Ethics Review Board, toll free, at (800) 223-8118. Visit the NHAMCS participants website for more information about the survey (www.cdc.gov/nhamcs). We greatly appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Charles J. Rothwell
Director