

# The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)

## National Health Care Surveys Registry

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### Contents

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) .....	1
1. How is the National Health Care Surveys Registry like other Specialized Registries or Public Health Reporting Registries? .....	4
2. How is the National Health Care Surveys Registry different than other Specialized Registries or Public Health Reporting Registries?.....	4
3. What benefit will we receive for registering to submit data to the National Health Care Surveys? .....	5
4. How can registering to submit data to the National Health Care Surveys be used to potentially earn a positive payment adjustment under MIPS? .....	5
5. How do clinicians, providers and hospitals achieve and maintain active engagement with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)?.....	5
6. What types of clinicians and providers can register their intent to submit data to the National Health Care Surveys? .....	6
7. What type of providers are eligible for the EHR Incentive Programs? .....	6
9. Where can I find the National Center for Health Statistics' (NCHS) National Health Care Surveys Declaration of Readiness for public health reporting? .....	6
10. When can I register for MIPS and PI with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)? .....	6
11. How long during the year will you accept registration requests?.....	6
12. What is the scope of data requested by the National Health Care Surveys? .....	6
National Health Care Surveys Sample Years and Data Requested by Sampled Year .....	6
13. What is the cost of registration? .....	7
14. What agreements must be signed in order to register? .....	7
This section provides questions and answers regarding Registration with the National Health Care Surveys Registry.....	8
1. How do we register?.....	8

2. I have questions about registration for the National Health Care Surveys.....	8
This section provides information for those Already Registered with the National Health Care Surveys Registry. .9	
1. If our clinicians and/or providers are registered in the National Health Care Survey Registry, how will we know if any of our clinicians and providers are sampled to participate in one of the National Health Care Surveys? .....	9
2. How long after completing registration will I know which, if any, of my providers have been selected for data submission?.....	9
3. How do I make changes to an existing registration or register additional clinicians or providers? .....	9
4. How often do I have to register with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) to remain in active engagement? AND do we need to register again each year?.....	9
5. Can NCHS supply information on active engagement status? .....	9
6. If our clinicians or providers are no longer participating in MIPS or PI, can they remain in the National Health Care Surveys registry?.....	9
This section provides information for those Sampled for one of the National Health Care Surveys.....	
1. How much electronic health data are requested if invited to submit data? .....	10
2. What data elements are required if selected to submit data?.....	10
3. What types of clinical notes are requested for data submission? .....	10
4. In what format are data submitted to NCHS?.....	10
How will data be transmitted to NCHS? .....	10
Data transmission will be via Secured File Transmission Protocol (SFTP) using the CDC’s Secure Access Management Services (SAMS). Each data submitter will be provided with their own secure account for data transmission.....	10
How much lead time is granted to establish data submission once a registrant is selected to submit electronic health data?.....	11
Is patient authorization required before I can submit requested electronic health data to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)?.....	11
This section provides information for Implementers, Developers, and Vendors.....	
1. Where can I find resources for implementers, developers, and vendors wishing to certify to the National Health Care Surveys: Meaningful Use/ Promoting Interoperability criterion or in some other way interested in supporting providers with an implementation guide for the HL7 standard for the National Health Care Surveys? .....	12
Please visit the Vendor / Implementer Technical Details page for the National Health Care Surveys. ....	12
[provide hyperlink when available].....	12
This document was updated on July 23, 2018.....	12



## This section provides questions and answers for those Seeking Information regarding the National Health Care Surveys in relation to the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) and/ or the Promoting Interoperability (PI) Programs.

### 1. How is the National Health Care Surveys Registry like other Specialized Registries or Public Health Reporting Registries?

Similar to other Specialized Registries or Public Health Reporting Registries, the National Health Care Surveys Registry helps clinicians and providers to:

- 1) Submit data regarding patients and health systems in support of important public health objectives
- 2) Earn MIPS Performance or Bonus Points or eligibility to attest to meeting a PI measure.

In addition, registering allows clinicians and providers to immediately be in active engagement with the National Center for Health Statistics by fulfilling Option 1: Registration of active engagement. Invited registrants will also provide NCHS with information needed to help you fulfill Option 2: Testing & Validation and Option 3: Production of active engagement. More information regarding active engagement is described below.

### 2. How is the National Health Care Surveys Registry different than other Specialized Registries or Public Health Reporting Registries?

While other Specialized Registries and Public Health Reporting Registries typically invite all registrants to submit clinical data from their certified EHR technology, only some clinicians and providers who register with the National Health Care Surveys Registry will be asked to submit clinical data. Specifically, only registered clinicians and providers who were selected in a sample for one of the National Health Care Surveys will receive an invitation to submit data.

#### **Example 1: Registration of Group Practice**

A group practice registers 100 clinicians and providers, fulfilling Option 1: Registration of active engagement. NCHS subsequently determines that 5 of those registrants were selected for the National Ambulatory Hospital Care Survey (NAMCS) sample. The 5 registrants in the NAMCS sample will be invited to submit clinical data in order to fulfill requirements for Option 2: Testing & Validation and Option 3: Production of active engagement. The 95 registrants who were not selected in the NAMCS sample will not be invited to submit clinical data, but they too satisfy the active engagement requirements achieved by their sampled peers.

#### **Example 2: Registration of a Hospital System**

A hospital system registers 5 hospitals, fulfilling Option 1: Registration of active engagement. The National Center for Health Statistics subsequently determines that 1 of those registrants was selected for the National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS) sample. The 1 registrant in the NHCS sample will be invited to submit clinical data in order to fulfill requirements for Option 2: Testing & Validation and Option 3: Production of active engagement. The 4 registrants who were not selected in the NHCS sample will not be invited to submit clinical data, but they too satisfy the active engagement requirements achieved by their sampled peer.

### 3. What benefit will we receive for registering to submit data to the National Health Care Surveys?

The National Health Care Surveys are now an option available to meet public health reporting objectives in one of two ways: per the final rule on modifications to PI in 2015 through 2017; PI stage 3 in 2018 and beyond; and an Advancing Care Information (ACI) performance measure under MIPS. Upon registration you will be e-mailed a registration confirmation letter that demonstrates your active engagement to submit electronic public health data to a public health agency/specialized registry. Specifically, the confirmation letter indicates that you have successfully registered your intent to submit data to NCHS should you be invited to do so. Annually, National Health Care Surveys registered clinicians or providers will be issued Active Engagement documentation that can be used for attestation and auditing purposes. These are tangible benefits to those who are participating in either MIPS or PI.

### 4. How can registering to submit data to the National Health Care Surveys be used to potentially earn a positive payment adjustment under MIPS?

Registrants may receive either a performance or bonus credit to the Advancing Care Information (ACI) performance category of MIPS.

### 5. How do clinicians, providers and hospitals achieve and maintain active engagement with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)?

Active engagement with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a public health agency, for the purpose of submitting National Health Care Survey data can be demonstrated in three ways as specified below.

Active Engagement Option 1—Completed Registration to Submit Data: The clinician or provider is registered to submit data with the Public Health Authority (PHA) to which the information is being submitted; registration was completed within 60 days after the start of the EHR reporting period; and the clinician or provider is awaiting an invitation from the PHA to begin testing and validation.

Active Engagement Option 2—Testing and Validation: The clinician or provider is in the process of testing and validation of the electronic submission of data. Clinicians or providers must respond to requests from the PHA within 30 days; failure to respond twice within an EHR reporting period results in that clinician or provider not meeting the measure.

Active Engagement Option 3—Production: The clinician or provider has completed testing and validation of the electronic submission and is electronically submitting production data to the PHA.

6. What types of clinicians and providers can register their intent to submit data to the National Health Care Surveys?

All types of clinicians and providers, including MIPS eligible clinicians and PI providers (eligible professionals, eligible hospitals, and critical access hospitals), are welcome to register their intent to submit data to the National Health Care Surveys Registry. The Registry accepts any specialty or sub-specialty of provider or clinician.

7. What type of providers are eligible for the EHR Incentive Programs?

A list of PI eligible professional types may be found [here](#).

Information regarding PI hospital eligibility may be found [here](#).

8. Where can I find information regarding MIPS?

MIPS is part of the CMS [Quality Payment Program](#) (QPP).

9. Where can I find the National Center for Health Statistics' (NCHS) National Health Care Surveys Declaration of Readiness for public health reporting?

The National Health Care Surveys Declaration of Readiness for Public Health Reporting may be found [here](#).

10. When can I register for MIPS and PI with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)?

Registration for the National Health Care Surveys is currently open.

11. How long during the year will you accept registration requests?

We will process registration requests on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

12. What is the scope of data requested by the National Health Care Surveys?

National Health Care Surveys Sample Years and Data Requested by Sampled Year

Data requested vary by type of National Health Care Survey:

**National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS)** - A sample year is equal to a calendar year. NAMCS randomly samples physicians and then samples patient visits to those sampled physicians for a one-week reporting period. Data are submitted for all patient visits to the sampled physician within a randomly selected one-week reporting period in each survey year. Data regarding the physician and office/practice characteristics will also be collected.

**National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS)** - A sample year is equal to a calendar year. Data are submitted for all emergency and outpatient department visits to the hospital within a randomly selected one-month reporting period in each survey year, rotating every 15 months. Data regarding the facility characteristics will also be collected.

**National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS)** - A sample year is equal to a calendar year. NHCS sampled hospitals usually remains in the sample for five or more years. Data are submitted for all inpatient, emergency, and outpatient department visits to the hospital for a full calendar year in each survey year. Data regarding the facility characteristics will also be collected.

<b>Survey</b>	<b>Assigned data collection period</b>
<b>NAMCS</b>	One randomly selected week per physician from any of 52 weeks in the calendar year.
<b>NHAMCS</b>	All emergency and outpatient department encounters from one month in the calendar year.
<b>NHCS</b>	All hospital discharges, emergency and outpatient department encounters for a calendar year.

13. What is the cost of registration?

Registration is offered free of charge.

14. What agreements must be signed in order to register?

All that is needed for registration is submission and approval of requested registration information. There is no data sharing agreement, business associate, or other agreements to sign. In addition, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is not authorized to enter into any such agreements with prospective registrants.

## This section provides questions and answers regarding Registration with the National Health Care Surveys Registry.

### 1. How do we register?

Registration for the National Health Care Surveys is now handled through the National Health Care Surveys Registry Portal located [here](#). [provide hyperlink when available.]

### 2. I have questions about registration for the National Health Care Surveys.

[Here](#) [provide hyperlink when available] is a FAQ document maintained on the National Health Care Surveys Registry Portal that can help. Also there is a contact us feature on the Portal that allows you to e-mail your questions to Portal operations personnel.

## This section provides information for those Already Registered with the National Health Care Surveys Registry.

1. If our clinicians and/or providers are registered in the National Health Care Survey Registry, how will we know if any of our clinicians and providers are sampled to participate in one of the National Health Care Surveys?

If one or more of your clinicians or providers is sampled by one of the National Health Care Surveys, we will contact the primary and secondary contacts assigned by your organization during the registration process.

2. How long after completing registration will I know which, if any, of my providers have been selected for data submission?

It may take up to 3 months for us to notify the provider's primary contact that they are sampled in one of the National Health Care Surveys and thus will be invited to submit data.

For those providers invited to participate we will provide at least four weeks lead time. We will work with clinicians and providers to determine the best methods for transmitting the data.

3. How do I make changes to an existing registration or register additional clinicians or providers?

Updating registrations for the National Health Care Surveys is now handled through the National Health Care Surveys Registry Portal located [here](#). [provide hyperlink when available]

4. How often do I have to register with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) to remain in active engagement? AND do we need to register again each year?

Clinicians or providers who have registered in previous years do not need to submit an additional registration to meet the requirement for each PI or MIPS performance/reporting period. NCHS asks that you update information on your registrants annually in May or June each year. If you wish to update semi-annually or quarterly you may, but it is not necessary to update that frequently.

5. Can NCHS supply information on active engagement status?

Annually, in January, NCHS issues active engagement documentation for registrants covering the just ended calendar year.

6. If our clinicians or providers are no longer participating in MIPS or PI, can they remain in the National Health Care Surveys registry?

Yes. If you choose to stop attesting to active engagement with NCHS, you may still participate in the National Health Care Surveys. If you have previously been invited to submit data, continued participation by all selected providers is important to maintaining the integrity of the surveys. If you have not yet been invited to submit data remaining registered into the future allows us to more effectively and efficiently contact your organization if your clinicians and or providers are sampled for the National Health Care Surveys in future years.

## This section provides information for those Sampled for one of the National Health Care Surveys

### 1. How much electronic health data are requested if invited to submit data?

This depends on which survey(s) your provider(s) has been selected for:

**National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS)** - data are submitted for all patient visits to the physician within a randomly selected one-week reporting period in each survey year. Data regarding the physician and office/practice characteristics are also collected.

**National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS)** - data are submitted for all emergency and outpatient department visits to the hospital within a randomly selected one-month reporting period in each survey year. Data regarding the facility characteristics are also be collected.

**National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS)** - data are submitted for all inpatient, emergency, and outpatient department visits to the hospital for a full calendar year in each survey year. Data regarding the facility characteristics are also collected.

### 2. What data elements are required if selected to submit data?

Please see the *Nat Health Care Surveys and PI\_MIPS.pdf* for more information.

### 3. What types of clinical notes are requested for data submission?

Clinical notes are desired by us but optional for you to submit. We are requesting the following note types: Triage, Intake, History of Present Illness (HPI), Clinical Impression and Discharge.

### 4. In what format are data submitted to NCHS?

1. Electronic health data submissions will be accepted by CDC/NCHS in one of the following 3 formats: HL7 CDA® documents as described by the Implementation Guide for National Health Care Surveys Release 1, DSTU Release 1.1 - US Realm, available from the HL7 website. (Note: This is the preferred format and the format that is required for Stage 3 accreditation for this measure.) [http://www.hl7.org/implement/standards/product\\_brief.cfm?product\\_id=385](http://www.hl7.org/implement/standards/product_brief.cfm?product_id=385)
2. A custom extract built to include data elements as specified in the National Health Care Surveys Data Elements list (available on request).
3. Continuity of Care Documents (CCDs) produced by your Certified Electronic Health Record Technology (CEHRT).

### How will data be transmitted to NCHS?

Data transmission will be via Secured File Transmission Protocol (SFTP) using the CDC's Secure Access Management Services (SAMS). Each data submitter will be provided with their own secure account for data transmission.

NCHS is working on providing other transmission options for vendors and providers including a Direct address.

If you require more detailed information on electronic data submission, you may request a call with one of our data submission experts.

Some additional information regarding your facility and providers will also be collected via phone call, in-person interview, or short web survey, depending upon the survey you are selected for and the most convenient means of data collection.

### How much lead time is granted to establish data submission once a registrant is selected to submit electronic health data?

Once you have successfully registered, and your data submission has been tested and validated, you will receive an invitation to submit your data for production. You have thirty days to respond to requests from NCHS for setting up production submission of your data. The process from initial contact by NCHS to ongoing submission of production data typically takes several months.

### Is patient authorization required before I can submit requested electronic health data to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)?

By registering with NCHS, you are indicating that you recognize NCHS as a public health agency. HIPAA and the Privacy Rule allow providers to disclose protected health information without patient authorization for public health purposes to public health authorities. If the type of protected health information sent is directly identifiable or indirectly identifiable, the provider must keep an Accounting Document on file for 6 years. However, if the data are de-identified, no accounting is required.

Further information on HIPAA and the Privacy Rule are available [here](#).

In addition, copies of approval letters from the NCHS Research Ethics Review Board for each survey are available upon request. The approvals grant waivers for the requirements of informed patient consent, informed physician consent, and patient authorization for release of patient medical record data by health care providers.

## This section provides information for Implementers, Developers, and Vendors

1. Where can I find resources for implementers, developers, and vendors wishing to certify to the National Health Care Surveys: Meaningful Use/ Promoting Interoperability criterion or in some other way interested in supporting providers with an implementation guide for the HL7 standard for the National Health Care Surveys?

Please visit the [Vendor / Implementer Technical Details](#) page for the National Health Care Surveys.

[provide hyperlink when available]

This document was updated on July 23, 2018.