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# ANNUAL HOSPITAL INTERVIEW

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Frequently Asked Questions about the  
2021 Annual Hospital Interview (AHI)  
Supplement of the National Hospital Care Survey



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the 2021 Annual Hospital Interview (AHI), Supplement of the National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS)

The Annual Hospital Interview (AHI) is an annual supplemental component of the National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS). The NHCS, conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), is designed to provide accurate and reliable health care statistics that answer key questions of interest to health care and public health professionals, researchers, and health care policy makers. Hospitals are randomly selected to provide nationally representative data on hospital utilization. The 2021 NHCS sample consists of 608 non-institutional, non-federal hospitals with six or more staffed inpatient beds. All hospitals in the 2021 NHCS sample are asked to complete the 2021 AHI to create national estimates on hospital care and utilization. Additional information about the NHCS is available [here](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs/index.htm) (<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs/index.htm>).

The 2021 AHI asks hospitals to provide summary information on emergency department, outpatient department, and inpatient department visits for the calendar year. This information will be used for statistical purposes and for further insight on sampled hospitals. The 2021 AHI also includes questions concerning the impact of COVID-19 and use of telemedicine in hospitals. Additional information about the AHI is available [here](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs/annual_hospital_interview.htm) ([https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs/annual\\_hospital\\_interview.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs/annual_hospital_interview.htm)).

Please refer to the questions and answers below for more information on the AHI. Please refer to the last page for acronyms and definitions used in the AHI.

Please contact the AHI support team at [ahi-support@cdc.gov](mailto:ahi-support@cdc.gov) with additional questions.

### **1. What is the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI)?**

The AHI is a supplemental component of the National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS). The AHI is a set of questions about summary administrative hospital data that include visit counts, the impact of COVID-19, and use of telemedicine. This information will be used for statistical purposes and for further insight on sampled hospitals.

### **2. What is the benefit of completing the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI)?**

The data provided by your organization will be used to help develop national estimates on hospital care and utilization. The data collected will help improve the reporting on COVID-19 and use of telemedicine in the nation's hospitals. The success of the study depends on the willingness of health care professionals to provide information on current health care services in the United States.

### **3. When does the 2021 Annual Hospital Interview (AHI) need to be completed?**

The deadline to complete the AHI is July 29, 2022.

### **4. How long will it take to complete the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI)?**

The amount of time may vary between hospitals depending on how many staff members are involved. We estimate that it should take an average of two hours to complete the AHI.

**5. What types of questions are included in the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI)?**

The AHI is at most 14 questions that collect summary administrative hospital data on:

- Emergency department visit counts
- Outpatient department visit counts
- Inpatient department visit counts
- Impact of vaccines on COVID-19 inpatient visits
- Use of telemedicine in the emergency department, outpatient department, and inpatient department

You can access the list of questions in its entirety [here](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhcs/2021-AHI-Preview-Questionnaire-508.pdf) (https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhcs/2021-AHI-Preview-Questionnaire-508.pdf). Please note that this list of questions is for planning purposes only and cannot be used to complete the AHI. Responses to the AHI questions must be entered into the AHI Portal to complete the AHI. Do not send any data through email.

**6. Why was I selected to complete the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI)?**

All hospitals in the 2021 NHCS sample are asked to complete the 2021 AHI to create national estimates on hospital care and utilization. The 2021 NHCS sample consist of 608 non-institutional, non-federal hospitals with six or more staffed inpatient beds. Hospitals are randomly selected to provide nationally representative data on hospital utilization. Each hospital selected for the survey uniquely represents facilities of similar size, service type, and/or geographic location and cannot be replaced. The success of the study depends on the willingness of health care professionals to provide information on current health care services in the United States.

**7. I completed the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI) last year. Do I need to complete it again this year?**

Thank you for completing the 2020 AHI! Your 2020 AHI responses are being used to help create national estimates of hospital utilization for the forthcoming 2020 National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS). Whether you had completed the 2020 AHI or not, we ask that you please complete the 2021 AHI.

The AHI is a yearly supplemental component of the NHCS. The 2021 AHI has been updated by replacing questions to the survey, simplifying existing questions and adding new questions about the impact of COVID-19 and use of telemedicine in hospitals. The information you provide in the 2021 AHI will assist in creating national estimates of hospital utilization for the 2021 NHCS. We appreciate your continued engagement with the AHI and the NHCS.

**8. What is the four-digit number in the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI) invitation email and AHI Portal?**

The four-digit number included in the AHI invitation email and on the AHI Portal is an anonymized National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS)-sampled hospital identifier. This hospital identifier allows NHCS to protect the confidentiality of your hospital. If your AHI invitation email and AHI Portal contain multiple hospital identifiers, this is because you are being asked to complete an AHI for each of these hospitals represented by the sampled hospital identifiers. Please contact the AHI support team at [ahi-support@cdc.gov](mailto:ahi-support@cdc.gov) with additional questions.

**9. I do not know which hospital is associated with the four-digit National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS)-sampled hospital identifier in my Annual Hospital Interview (AHI) invitation email. What do I do?**

Please contact the AHI support team at [ahi-support@cdc.gov](mailto:ahi-support@cdc.gov) to schedule a phone call to securely confirm the hospital name and address with its four-digit NHCS-sampled hospital identifier. If you are the point of contact for multiple hospitals in the NHCS sample, then each hospital name and address will be confirmed in a phone call. Do not send any data or include hospital name or address through email.

**10. How do I change the point of contact for the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI)?**

Please contact the AHI support team at [ahi-support@cdc.gov](mailto:ahi-support@cdc.gov) to change the point of contact to complete the AHI.

**11. I see multiple hospital identifiers when I log into the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI) Portal. Do I need to fill out a separate AHI for each hospital listed?**

Yes, we ask that you complete an individual AHI for each hospital listed. Please click on the NHCS-sampled hospital identifier to complete its AHI.

**12. What if I need clarification on the questions in the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI)?**

Definitions are available for terminology used in the AHI; these definitions are hyperlinked in the survey. Please click on the hyperlinked term to view its definition in a pop-up. Also, if you click on the ⓘ found next to a question, a pop-up will appear with definitions and more information. Additionally, for a list of acronyms and definitions used in the AHI, please see the last page of this document. Please contact the AHI support team at [ahi-support@cdc.gov](mailto:ahi-support@cdc.gov) with additional questions.

**13. How do I know when I have completed the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI)?**

There will be a “Completion Status” indicator above the questions in the AHI. The indicator will change from “New” to “In Progress” after you have started to answer the AHI. Your responses will be saved automatically, as well as when you click on the “Save” navigation button while answering questions. The indicator will change from “In Progress” to “Complete” after you have answered all questions and clicked on the “Submit” navigation button after the last question.

If you are responsible for multiple hospitals, the completion status of each AHI will also be listed next to its NHCS-sampled hospital identifier after logging into the AHI Portal.

**14. I have already completed the Annual Hospital Interview (AHI), but I need to change an answer. How do I do that?**

Even if your AHI “Completion Status” indicator says “Complete,” you can still make changes and edits to your answers until July 29, 2022. To make changes, select the NHCS-sampled hospital identifier for the AHI that you would like to update. Then navigate to the answer(s) you would like to change and edit your response(s). Your new response(s) will be saved automatically, as well as when you click on the “Save” navigation button. After you have answered all questions, submit your updated responses by clicking on the “Submit” navigation button after the last question.

# Annual Hospital Interview (AHI) Acronyms & Definitions Key

## Acronyms

AHI: Annual Hospital Interview

COVID-19: Coronavirus disease 2019

EHR: Electronic health record

NHCS: National Hospital Care Survey

NCHS: National Center for Health Statistics

## Definitions

Emergency department: A facility serving an unscheduled patient population with anticipated needs for emergency medical, surgical, or behavioral health care. Such locations receive emergency medical service (EMS) transports 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

Inpatient department: Unit of a hospital where patients are formally admitted for medical conditions that require appropriate care and attention for a minimum of one night. It is equipped with beds and medical equipment. Examples of inpatient units include burn critical care; medical critical care; trauma critical care; pediatric medical critical care; dialysis specialty care area; burn ward; labor and delivery ward; neurology ward; oncology general hematology-oncology ward; pediatric surgical ward; adult mixed acuity unit.

Inpatient discharges: Release of a patient who was formally admitted into a hospital for treatment and/or care and who stayed for a minimum of one night. Includes emergency cases and urgent admissions when they result in an overnight stay and formal admission. Excludes outpatient cases (including emergency department visits).

Live births: Complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of human conception, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy, which, after such expulsion or extraction, breathes, or shows any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles, whether or not the umbilical cord has been cut or the placenta is attached. Heartbeats are to be distinguished from transient cardiac contractions; respirations are to be distinguished from fleeting respiratory efforts or gasps. Exclude fetal deaths.

NHCS-Sampled Hospital Identifier: A four-digit number used to identify hospitals without using hospital identifiable information.

Outpatient department: An outpatient department visit/use/event is any visit made during the person's reference period to a hospital outpatient department, such as a unit of a hospital, or a facility connected with a hospital, providing health and medical services to individuals who receive services from the hospital but do not require hospitalization overnight. Examples of outpatient clinics include well-baby clinics/pediatric outpatient department; obesity clinics; eye, ear, nose, and throat clinics; family planning clinics; cardiology clinics; internal medicine departments; alcohol and drug abuse clinics; physical therapy clinics; and radiation therapy clinics. Hospital outpatient departments may also provide general primary care.

Telemedicine technology: Audio, audio with video, and web videoconference