



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention

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

Dear

I am writing to request your participation in the National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS) conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Currently, NHCS is an electronic data collection, gathering Uniform Bill (UB) administrative claims data, including patient identifiers, to create estimates of hospital inpatient utilization in the United States. Patient identifiers are being collected to enable linkage to birth and death records, and data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Participation in NHCS is completely voluntary. You or your staff may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Your participation allows us to more accurately describe hospitals like yours in our national statistics and helps us to continue to serve as a resource to the hospital community, health care researchers, and policy makers. To help cover the cost of the set-up, we offer participating hospitals a one-time reimbursement of \$500. Participating hospitals also receive a \$500 reimbursement for each year that the electronic data collection is completed.

No information collected in this study will be published in any manner that will allow identification of individual hospitals or patients. Be assured that there are several ways that the Privacy Rule (as mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act [HIPAA]) allows you to participate. In particular, disclosures of patient data are permitted for public health purposes and for research that has been approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), both of which apply to this study. The IRB at CDC's NCHS has reviewed and approved all aspects of this study. Included in the enclosures is the "Frequently Asked Questions". Please note, in particular, the detailed section on confidentiality and use of data.

Please be assured that we are required by law to keep all data regarding patients and facilities strictly confidential and to use these data only for research and statistical purposes as stated by Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act [42 United States Code 242m (d) and Section 512 of the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (PL-107-347)].

To provide a more complete picture of hospital care, NHCS plans to incorporate collection of data from a sample of visits to emergency departments (EDs), outpatient departments (OPDs), and hospital-based ambulatory surgery locations (ASLs). Hospitals with eligible EDs, OPDs, and/or ASLs will get an additional \$500 reimbursement for each year that ambulatory data collection is completed. In the future, you may be re-contacted for additional ED, OPD, and ASL data that will be collected via medical record abstraction.

NCHS has contracted with Westat, a longstanding research organization, to assist in this task. A representative from Westat will telephone you to arrange for an appointment to discuss the possibility of your hospital's participation in the NHCS. If you have questions, please feel free to call Ms. Kathy Chimes, Westat Project Director for NHCS, at (301) 251-4302 or Dr. Carol DeFrances, Team Leader, Hospital Care Team at NCHS, at (301) 458-4440.

Sincerely,

Charles Rothwell
Director, National Center for Health Statistics

Enclosures