



I am writing to thank you for your continued participation in the inpatient component of the National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS) conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics. You may remember when we originally contacted your hospital about participating in the NHCS, in addition to inpatient data, we discussed the need to collect data on the utilization of health care services provided by your emergency department (ED), outpatient department (OPD), and ambulatory surgery locations. We are contacting you now to notify you that we are preparing to field a pretest of that data collection effort at your hospital.

During the pretest, we will conduct an interview to collect descriptive data on your hospital's characteristics, including electronic health record adoption, ED crowding, and visit volume. Our staff will abstract data from medical records on a sample of patient visits in several ambulatory units within the hospital including EDs, OPD clinics, and ambulatory surgery locations.

CDC's National Center for Health Statistics is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the data collected for this study. All information collected will be held confidential according to Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42, U.S. Code, 242m(d)) and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (Title 5 of PL 107-347) and will be used for statistical purposes only. Provisions of the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act provide for a felony conviction and/or fine up to \$250,000 if this promise is violated.

Additionally, the Privacy Rule as mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) allows your hospital to participate in several ways.

- Disclosure of patient data is permitted for public health purposes.
- NHCS has been approved by the CDC/National Center for Health Statistics' Research Ethics Review Board.

The Field Manager assigned to your hospital from Westat, acting as our agent, will be contacting you soon about your hospital's voluntary participation in the pretest of the ambulatory component.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Kathy Chimes, the Westat Project Director (phone: (301) 251-4302, e-mail: chimesk1@westat.com) or myself, Dr. Carol DeFrances, Team Leader, National Hospital Care Survey (phone: (301) 458-4440, e-mail: cdefrances@cdc.gov).

Sincerely,

Carol DeFrances, Ph. D.
Team Leader, National Hospital Care Survey