



An Introduction to the National Hospital Care Survey



Sponsored by:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Health Statistics





Introduction and background

The National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS) is a new survey that integrates inpatient data formerly collected by the National Hospital Discharge Survey and emergency department (ED), outpatient department (OPD), and ambulatory surgery center (ASC) data collected by the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey. Beginning in 2011, a sample of hospitals will be recruited for this survey. During the first 2 years of the survey, hospitals will be asked to provide data on all inpatients from their Uniform Bill (UB)–04 administrative database, as well as facility-level data through a facility questionnaire. In 2013, in addition to inpatient data, the hospitals will be asked to provide data on the utilization of health care services provided in their EDs, OPDs, and ASCs. Also in 2013, a sample of freestanding ASCs will be recruited.

Purpose of the new survey

NHCS will provide nationally representative data on the utilization of hospital care and other statistics on inpatient care, as well as care delivered in emergency and outpatient departments and in hospital-based and freestanding ASCs. The collection of personal identifiers (protected health information) will allow the linking of care provided to the same patient in the ED, OPD, ASC, and inpatient department. These identifiers will also permit encounters to be linked to the National Death Index to measure postdischarge mortality, and to Medicare and Medicaid data to obtain





a more complete picture of patient care. Gathering all UB–04 data from a hospital will permit the sampling of hospital discharges with specific diagnoses and procedures for special studies that will use medical record abstraction to collect clinical data.

Participation

Your hospital was selected randomly from among all hospitals in the United States. Another hospital cannot be chosen in place of your hospital because this would jeopardize the nationally representative nature of the survey.

Starting in 2011, participation includes completing an annual facility questionnaire and transmitting all of your hospital's inpatient UB–04 records to a secure server. In 2013, participation will include chart abstractions of a sample of visits to EDs, OPDs, and ASCs along with all UB–04 data.

Participation in this project is voluntary, and there is no penalty for not participating. However, the success of the survey depends on the willingness of health care professionals like you to provide information on current health care services in the United States. In addition, health information management staff will be eligible for continuing education credits for taking time to learn about the survey at:

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs/continuing_education.htm.





Data collection

The facility questionnaire requests descriptive information, including hospital characteristics, clinical capabilities and services, types of revenue sources, and health information technology. We anticipate that the facility questionnaire will require input from several individuals on your hospital's staff, such as administrative, medical records, billing, and finance staff, and will take about 2 hours to complete.

We are asking that you electronically transmit all inpatient UB-04 claims data to a secure server. We anticipate that it will take approximately 1 hour to prepare and transmit the file, and we are asking that you transmit these data from your hospital every 3 months.

Your hospital may also be selected to participate in special studies that use record abstraction. As with all other aspects of this survey, these special studies will be voluntary.

Confidentiality and data safeguarding

All information that would permit identification of an individual or hospital participating in this survey is kept strictly confidential. Survey participants receive assurance of this confidentiality under the Public Health Services Act. All project staff members have signed confidentiality agreements and are prohibited by law from using the information they receive for





anything other than this project. Any other use is a violation of federal law and is subject to heavy fines and imprisonment.

Compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and its Privacy Rule allows hospitals to disclose protected health information without patient authorization for public health purposes. Additionally, the Institutional Review Board of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) has approved the national survey. This data collection effort is approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

Sponsorship

This project is sponsored by NCHS. The mission of NCHS is to provide statistical information that will guide actions and policies to improve the health of the American people. As the Nation's principal health statistics agency, NCHS leads the way with accurate, relevant, and timely data.

The National Hospital Care Survey is being conducted for NCHS by RTI International, a nonprofit research firm. Social & Scientific Systems, Inc. (SSS), a subcontractor to RTI, will be recruiting hospitals on behalf of NCHS.





For more information

If you have not already been contacted, an SSS project staff member will contact you by telephone shortly to discuss your participation in this important project. For any concerns or questions, you may contact the SSS Recruitment Manager, Ms. Lourdes Suárez, at **877-321-6437**, or lsuarez@s-3.com.

To confirm that RTI and SSS are conducting this project for the Center and for further NHCS information, contact:

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Or visit the National Hospital Care Survey website: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs.htm>

