



National Center for Health Statistics
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Hyattsville, Maryland 20782

NHAMCS
Endorsing Organizations

American College of
Emergency Physicians
(ACEP)

Emergency Nurses
Association (ENA)

American Health
Information Management
Association (AHIMA)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) has been conducting the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS), an annual study of hospital-based outpatient care, since 1992. The purpose of this study is to collect information about the portion of ambulatory care provided by hospital emergency departments throughout the United States. The information requested includes data about patient visits, and hospital and department characteristics.

Many organizations and leaders in the health care community, including those providing the enclosed letters of endorsement, have expressed their support and join me in urging your participation in this meaningful study. Given the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, we recognize this is a challenging time for medical professionals and you have many competing priorities. You may refuse to participate or choose not to answer any question at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Although your participation in the study will be of no direct benefit to you or your hospital, it will ensure that hospitals like yours are represented in this important study that examines the utilization and provision of hospital-based ambulatory medical care services in the United States. The information you choose to provide in this study will be made available, without identifiers, to other investigators for future studies. If you participate you are giving consent. Your consent allows for your de-identified information being made available for future research by NCHS or other investigators.

The study will be conducted in three phases using an electronic questionnaire and will focus on a sample of patient encounters during a randomly assigned 4-week reporting period. A representative of the U.S. Census Bureau, acting as our agent, will be calling you to schedule an appointment regarding the details of your participation.

During the first phase, the representative will conduct an interview with you or one of the other two facility administrators or managers that also received this letter that focuses on some of the characteristics of your hospital and the capabilities of your electronic health records system; it should take about 30 minutes. For the second phase, each Emergency Service Area administrator or their designee is interviewed to determine eligible ambulatory care service areas; it should also take about 30 minutes. The final phase, which requires minimal input from your staff, is the abstraction of sampled patient encounters from your medical records. In the weeks following the completion of this study, you may be contacted again for a 15-minute reinterview, which is conducted as a quality control measure.

NCHS employees and agents, including employees of the Census Bureau, comply with the requirements of Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42 United States Code 242m(d)), the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (Title III of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Pub. L. No. 115-435, 132 Stat. 5529 § 302)), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) (Public Law 104-191), and the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. § 552a. In addition to the above cited laws, NCHS complies with the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015 (6 U.S.C. §§ 151 and 151 note) which protects Federal information systems from cybersecurity risks by screening their networks.

NCHS and Census Bureau employees working on this study are required by law to keep all information about your hospital and patients confidential. This information is subject to all of the published routine uses as identified in the Privacy Act System of Records Notice 09-20-0167 Health Resources Utilization Statistics.

If you have any questions regarding your participation, please call a NHAMCS representative at (800) 223-3815. Or, if you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please call the NCHS Ethics Review Board, toll free, at (800) 223-8118. Visit the NHAMCS participants website for more information about the survey (https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/ahcd/nhamcs_participant.htm). We greatly appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Brian C. Moyer, Ph.D.
Director