

Medical Provider Component

M E D I C A L E X P E N D I T U R E P A N E L S U R V E Y

OFFICE-BASED

What is the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey?

The Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) is a nationwide study conducted to learn more about the health care services people use, the charges for those services and the sources that pay for them. MEPS is conducted annually by the U.S. Public Health Service through the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Major components of MEPS include surveys of:

- A nationally representative sample of households;
- Hospitals, physicians, and pharmacies reported by the household participants; and
- Providers of health insurance.

MEPS is the most complete source of data available on health care use and expenses in the United States.

How are practices chosen for the MEPS Office-Based Provider Component?

Office-based medical providers were named by respondents in the household data collection as sources of health care during 2005. These household respondents signed HIPAA-compliant forms authorizing and requesting each of their medical providers to release the information sought by the study.

Why should this practice participate?

Office-based medical provider expenditures are a major component of health care costs. The information that you supply will supplement that given by your patient and help us build a more complete picture of health care expenditures for respondents in our study. Your patients have asked specifically for your help by signing the authorization form.

What information is needed from office-based medical providers?

For each of the patients on the enclosed list, we need this information about their 2005 medical events. For each date of service, we will need:

- Date of service
- Diagnoses (ICD-9 or DSM-4 codes)
- Services provided (CPT-4, or other relevant codes)
- Full established charge
- Method of reimbursement (fee-for-service or capitated)
- Payment sources/amounts.

How do I know the information will be kept confidential?

All data is kept in strict confidence. The confidentiality of data collected for MEPS is protected by Federal law under Sections 924(c) and 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 299c-3(c) and 242m(d)]. Identifying information collected for the study cannot be released without the permission of the individuals or establishments who provided the information.

Personal identifying information such as names or addresses are removed before information from the study made available to researchers. Findings are published in statistical summaries and tables and micro-data is released on "public use" data files.

Who is collecting this data?

The U.S. Public Health Service has chosen Westat, a national research company, to administer the study. A professionally trained data collection specialist from Westat will contact each practice.

What questions will the data collected answer?

MEPS data provide answers to many important questions. For example:

- How much of medical costs are covered by insurance?
- What do people pay out of pocket for their medical care?
- What conditions are being treated by office-based medical providers?
- What types of health care services are people receiving from office-based medical providers?

Any further questions?

Please call toll-free, at
1-800-318-3843.

For direct access to information about MEPS, go to
<http://www.meps.ahrq.gov>.