

We are requesting expedited review to help ensure that we have OMB approval in time for the start-up of project enrollment that is scheduled to occur on July 1. An earlier enrollment date than originally scheduled was made possible when the pilot survey was eliminated by SSA senior management. That decision was based on both budgetary considerations and the need to complete the project within the contractual time frames. SSA officials believed that eliminating the pilot survey, which was not a contractual requirement, would save money that could be redirected to help fund the survey screening interviews that are needed to determine which beneficiaries do not have health insurance and are therefore eligible for the project. By moving directly to the sample enrollment process in a planned slow phase-in, the project can learn something about the potential project eligibility rate of beneficiaries without the additional costs and public burden associated with mounting a separate pilot study. Moreover, the five year period of performance specified in the contract ends in January 2011. Since we cannot know with certainty at this point how many months will be needed to enroll the required number of participants, the sooner enrollments begin, the more likely it is we will complete the project on schedule.