

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 24, 2009

SUBJECT: 2009-2010 NS-CSHCN: Proposed Incentive Groups

Based on discussions at NORC and NCHS, the following revised groups are recommended for the incentive experiment in quarters Q3/2009 and Q4/2009 of the National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs (NS-CSHCN). These incentive groups (summarized in Table 1) have been designed to refine the successful incentive effort fielded in the 2007 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) and to answer seven key questions about prepaid and promised incentives.

All proposed incentive groups require that cases be age-eligible (a child lives in the household) before an incentive is offered. Age-eligibility can be determined during the NIS or NIS-Teen screening, or at the start of the NS-CSHCN interview. In addition, several of the incentive groups are refusal-based. Due to the complex relationship between the NIS, NIS-Teen, and NS-CSHCN surveys, prepaid incentives cannot be mailed systematically after first refusals because some respondents refuse participation before reaching the NS-CSHCN interview. As a result, refusal-based incentive groups will test the promise of a monetary incentive for cases with one refusal and the use of prepaid incentives after cases' second refusal.

Table 1. Incentive Experiment Groups

			1 st Refusal	2 nd Refusal			
				Cases with Mailing Address	Cases with No Mailing Address		
Group 1		No incentives offered at any point					
Group 2		Offer of \$5 directly after age-eligibility established					
Group 3	3A	Age-Eligibility Established	Offer of \$10 upon call back	\$5 mailing with promise of \$10	Offer of \$15 upon call back	Tests of \$5 prepaid	
	3B		No offer	\$5 mailing with promise of \$10	Offer of \$15 upon call back		
Group 4			No offer	\$5 mailing with no promise	Offer of \$5 upon call back		
Group 5	5A		Offer of \$10 upon call back	\$1 coin mailing with promise of \$10	Offer of \$11 upon call back	Tests of \$1 coin prepaid	
	5B		No offer	\$1 coin mailing with promise of \$10	Offer of \$11 upon call back		
Group 6			No offer	\$1 coin mailing with no promise	Offer of \$5 upon call back		

Group 1 serves as the control group and Group 2 serves as a key experimental group. In group 1, age-eligible cases are offered no incentives, and in Group 2, age-eligible cases are all offered \$5 as a token of appreciation. The remaining experimental groups test refusal-based incentive models. Group 3A replicates the approach adopted in 2007 NSCH (where age-eligible cases are offered \$10 on call back after the first refusal; after the second refusal, they are mailed \$5 with a promise of \$10) and is known to be successful, while Groups 3B, 5A and 5B are variations on reducing the costs associated with this successful approach (see Table 1). In Groups 4 and 6, age-eligible cases are mailed prepaid incentives after the second refusal without a promised incentive to measure the need to offer additional money.

This design allows NCHS and NORC to investigate the following seven questions:

Question 1. Are monetary incentives necessary to increase participation?

Our first goal is to determine whether an incentive effort is needed for 2009-2010 NS-CSHCN to increase response rates. Group 1, where no incentives are offered, will be compared to the experimental groups (individually and collectively) to measure the effects that incentives have on participation.

Question 2. Are refusal-based monetary incentives more cost effective than eligibility-based monetary incentives?

Our second goal is to determine whether a refusal-based incentive effort is needed for 2009-2010 NS-CSHCN to increase response rates while maintaining reasonable costs. The cost of offering \$5 to all age-eligible cases is likely to be more expensive than offering monetary incentives of equal or greater value to cases that first refuse participation. Group 2, where an incentive is promised to everyone with age-eligible children, will be compared to the Groups 3-6 (individually and collectively) to measure the effects that refusal-based incentives have on participation and cost.

Question 3. Do promised incentives increase participation?

This question can be answered by comparing the final participation rates for Groups 1 and 2. It can also be answered by comparing the interim participation rates for Groups 3A and 5A (collectively) with the same rate for Groups 3B, 4, 5B, and 6 (collectively). This interim participation rate would be calculated as if no further contact attempts were made following a second refusal.

Question 4. Do promised incentives with prepaid incentives increase participation relative to prepaid incentives alone?

The design also permits us to determine the boost in response rates (if any) due to promised incentives that accompany prepaid incentives. Participation rates for Groups 3B and 5B (collectively) will be compared to participation rates for Groups 4 and 6 (collectively). The comparison will be limited to those cases with known addresses, as these are the only cases that will be sent the prepaid incentive.

Question 5. Do prepaid incentives increase participation?

By comparing known-address cases in Groups 4 and 6 (collectively) to known-address cases in Group 1, we can evaluate whether prepaid incentives after the second refusal increase participation. We would have preferred to be able to examine this question by offering prepaid incentives following the first refusal, but as noted earlier, prepaid incentives cannot be mailed systematically after first refusals because some respondents refuse participation before reaching the NS-CSHCN interview.

Question 6. Is a promised incentive after the first refusal more cost-effective than offering a larger incentive only after the second refusal?

By comparing participation rates and cost between Groups 3A and 5A (collectively) and Groups 3B and 5B (collectively), we can evaluate whether including a promised offer of \$10 after the first refusal is more cost-effective than only offering \$11/\$15 (\$1/\$5 prepaid with \$10 promise) after the second refusal.

Question 7. Does the value of the prepaid incentive matter?

Our final goal is to evaluate whether a prepaid \$1 coin provides the same boost in participation rates as a prepaid \$5 bill. This can be evaluated by (individually and collectively) comparing known-address cases in Groups 5A, 5B, and 6 (the \$1 groups) with known-address cases in Groups 3A, 3B, and 4 (the \$5 groups).

In conclusion, answering these seven questions will allow NCHS and NORC to determine the best incentive model for the remainder of the 2009-2010 NS-CSHCN considering the impact on response rates and costs.