

**ATTACHMENT P:**  
**FOCUS GROUP ADVANCE LETTER**

[Date]

[NAME of Prospective Focus Group Participant]

Address

City, State, Zip Code

[Dear X:]

Re: Study of the Emergency Severity Index

Dear NAME:

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is conducting an assessment of the Emergency Severity Index (ESI), an emergency department triage tool used to standardize the triage process and improve the flow of patients in emergency departments in the U.S. This study will assess the ESI triage tool's acceptance by EDs, the usefulness of the ESI compared to other triage tools, and the extent to which the product has improved emergency services. The study will also focus on users' satisfaction with the ESI educational training materials comprised of a handbook and DVDs developed by AHRQ. AHRQ has secured the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) – a not-for-profit research organization at the University of Chicago – to conduct this study.

We are writing to request your participation in one important phase of data collection for the study: the focus groups. We obtained your name from the membership list of the [Emergency Nurses Association/ American College of Emergency Physicians], given our desire to speak with ED professionals who are familiar with or currently use the ESI in the ED. Our project team will be in [CITY, STATE] to conduct focus groups on [DATES]. If you work in an ED, and are familiar with or currently use the ESI in your ED, we would like to speak with you. Topics covered will include familiarity with the ESI, experiences using the ESI, comparison of the ESI to other triage tools, recommendations for AHRQ regarding further development of the ESI tool, and other thoughts about ED triage tools, more generally. The focus group will last no longer than 90 minutes. We recognize that you are a busy professional, and would like to show our appreciation for your time with a \$75 honorarium for participating in this focus group. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you will not be directly quoted. The information collected from these focus groups will be vital to a full understanding of the use of the ESI.

To confirm your participation in the focus group about the ESI, or should you have any questions, please contact X at NORC at xxx@norc.org or toll-free at 1-866-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this very important study.

Sincerely,

Bruce Siegel, MD, MPH  
Research Professor, Department of Health Policy  
The George Washington University

Daniel S. Gaylin, MPA  
Executive Vice President for Health Research  
National Opinion Research Center