



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

**Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention**

**National Center for  
Health Statistics  
3311 Toledo Road  
Hyattsville,**

**Maryland 20782**

Dear

We would like to request your participation in a national survey being conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to redesign the National Hospital Discharge Survey (NHDS). Since 1965, the NHDS has been a primary source of information on the nation's inpatient use in short-stay, non-federal hospitals. A redesign of the NHDS allows us to improve data to inform current and future policy and research issues. The NCHS has contracted with Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International, a non-profit research organization, to assist in this task. More information about RTI can be found at [www.rti.org](http://www.rti.org). Your participation in the national survey is voluntary. There are no penalties for refusing.

We plan to collect protected health information (PHI) for sampled discharges so that we can link to birth and death records in the future. PHI for this survey includes name, address, ZIP Code, social security number, medical record number, Medicare health insurance benefit/claim number, and dates of admission, birth, discharge, and procedures. This information will not be published in any manner. Be assured that there are several ways that the Privacy Rule (as mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act [HIPAA]) allows you to participate. In particular, disclosures of patient data are permitted for public health purposes and for research that has been approved by a CDC Institutional Review Board (IRB) – both of which apply to this survey. The IRBs at CDC's NCHS and RTI have reviewed and approved all aspects of this study. Included in the enclosures is a document called "Frequently Asked Questions", which covers a broad range of issues. Please note, in particular, the detailed section on confidentiality and use of data.

Please be assured that we are required by law to keep all data regarding patients and facilities strictly confidential and to use these data only for statistical purposes as stated by Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act [42 United States Code 242m (d) and Section 513 of the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (PL-107-347)]. Published documents resulting from this national survey will not include any patient or clinical data.

In several days, a representative from RTI will telephone you to arrange for an appointment to discuss the possibility of your hospital's participation in this national survey. If you have questions, please feel free to call RTI staff, Dr. John Loft at (312) 456-5241 or Ms. Sharon Campolucci at (770) 407-4905. Dr. Carol DeFrances, Team Leader of the Hospital Care Team at NCHS, may be contacted at (301) 458-4440.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Sondik, Ph.D.  
Director, National Center for Health Statistics  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Enclosures