



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service  
Centers for Disease Control and  
Prevention

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National Center for Health Statistics  
3311 Toledo Road  
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782

Dear [Name of Birth records specialist]:

I am writing to ask you to participate in a unique opportunity to build on the birth certificate data quality work that Washington State and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) have done together over the years. As you know, the birth certificate data you collect are essential for monitoring maternal and child health, developing and evaluating public health programs, and helping insure funding for maternal and child health at the local, state and national level.

Since 2003 birth records specialists have been using a new birth certificate form to collect the data. This new certificate includes both new data items and new ways of collecting the data. To make the data as good as possible, we need to understand how these new items and collection procedures are working. Because Washington State was one of the first to use the new form, NCHS has selected Washington as the first in which to study these issues. The Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, is partnering with NCHS in this effort. Briefly, this study involves conducting a focus group for birth records specialists from a small number of hospitals, followed by in-depth interviews with birth records specialists from these and other hospitals. Participants will receive \$75.00. Please read the attached Fact Sheet, which gives you information about the study.

You are eligible to participate in the study if your primary responsibility is collection of birth certificate data, and if you have been doing this job for at least six months. In the next two weeks, I will be calling you to ask you about your interest in participating in this study. If you would like to contact me directly before then, I can be reached by phone at 301-458-4569 or by email at [KWhitaker@cdc.gov](mailto:KWhitaker@cdc.gov).

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or wish to discuss the study further. I look forward to talking to you soon.

Sincerely,

Karen Whitaker  
National Center for Health Statistics  
Questionnaire Design Research Laboratory  
Phone: 301-458-4569  
[kwhitaker@cdc.gov](mailto:kwhitaker@cdc.gov).

Enclosure (1)



## Fact Sheet – Birth Certificate Data Study

### Who is doing the study?

The study will be conducted by staff of the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) who are experts in doing these types of interviews. The Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, is partnering with NCHS in this effort.

### Why is NCHS doing this study?

In 2003, Washington State began using a new birth certificate form that included new data items and new ways of collecting the data. NCHS wants to identify issues hospitals may be having in collecting the new birth data. NCHS also wants to gather ideas on approaches to improving data quality via the collection process.

### What will the study involve?

This study has two parts. First, NCHS experts will conduct a focus group discussion among staff from 6-8 hospitals located within an hour's drive of each other. Second, NCHS experts will conduct in-depth interviews with staff from these and other hospitals throughout the state to get information about their experiences with the new certificate form and data collection processes.

### Who should take part in the study?

NCHS experts want to talk with those who are on the front lines collecting, abstracting and entering birth certificate data. Therefore, participants should be hospital staff whose primary responsibility is collection of birth certificate data, and who have been doing this job for at least six months (so that they have had some experience with the process).

### How long will it take and will participants be reimbursed?

The focus group will last approximately 90 minutes. Each interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Participants will receive \$75.00 for each activity.

### Who will see the information that hospital staff provide?

Information regarding individual hospitals or participants will be kept confidential. By law, NCHS cannot release information to anyone which could identify a supporting hospital or participants without permission [(Public Health Service Act Section 308(d) (42 USC 242m), the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USE 552A)], and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act. When the results of this study are released by NCHS, the information from all discussions and interviews will have been combined, so that no one will be able to identify any hospital or participating individual.

### Do I have to participate?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. However, NCHS and the Washington State Department of Health hope you will support this important effort to improve and enhance the quality of birth certificate data.



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Dear [Hospital Administrator/Director of Medical Records]:

I am writing to inform you about a unique opportunity to build on the birth certificate data quality work the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and Washington State have done together over the years, and to ask for your support of this effort. As you may know, birth certificate data are essential for monitoring maternal and child health, developing and evaluating public health programs, and helping insure funding for maternal and child health at the local, state and national level.

In 2003 Washington State began using a new birth certificate form to collect the data. This new certificate included both new data items and new ways of collecting the data. To make the data as good as possible, we need to understand how these new items and collection procedures are working. Because Washington State was one of the first to use the new form, NCHS has selected Washington as the first state in which to study these issues. The Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, is partnering with NCHS in this effort. Briefly, this study involves conducting a focus group for staff from a small number of hospitals, followed by in-depth interviews with staff from these and other hospitals. The attached Fact Sheet gives you more information about the study.

All members of your staff whose primary responsibility is collection of birth certificate data, and who have been doing this job for at least six months are eligible to participate in this study. A similar letter and the Fact Sheet were sent directly to eligible hospital staff. We hope you will support this effort by encouraging those on your staff who collect birth certificate data to participate in this study.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or wish to discuss the study further.

Sincerely,

Karen Whitaker  
National Center for Health Statistics  
Questionnaire Design Research Laboratory  
Phone: 301-458-4569  
E-mail: [kwhitaker@cdc.gov](mailto:kwhitaker@cdc.gov)

Enclosure (1)



## Copy of Fact sheet sent to Birth Records Specialists

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