

Winter 2009

Dear Resident:

Last year your household was interviewed by the Census Bureau for a study about health and medical care conducted for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We are sending this letter because we need your help again in a companion study, the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS), being conducted for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

The goal of this survey is to collect information in an important area of continuing national interest – the use of health care, how much it costs, and how it is paid for. Households who participate in the study are interviewed five times over a 2½ year period and receive a gift of \$30 at the end of each interview for their effort of providing information about their family's healthcare.

Each selected household is extremely valuable to the study. Once selected, a household – and the story of its health care experience – cannot be replaced. Participation in the study is voluntary, but accurate results depend on the willing cooperation of households like yours. The privacy of the survey participants is protected throughout the study. By law, any information collected in the study that would identify individual participants must be kept confidential.¹

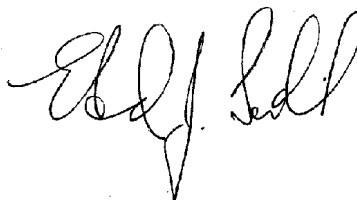
Shortly you'll receive a mailing that includes a short video and additional information about the study. In the meantime, you can learn more about MEPS by reading the enclosed project brochure, visiting our website at <http://www.meps.ahrq.gov> or by calling Alex Scott, a study representative, at the following toll-free number: 1-800-945-MEPS (6377).

We look forward to having you as part of this important study.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Clancy, M.D.
Director
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality



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

¹ This survey is authorized under Section 902(a) of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 299a]. The confidentiality of personal information is protected by Federal Statutes, Section 934(c) and Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 299c-3(c) and 242m(d)] and will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. That law requires that information collected for research conducted or supported by AHRQ that identifies individuals or establishments be used only for the purpose for which it was supplied unless you consent to the use of the information for another purpose.