October 22, 2012

Memorandum for: Reviewer of 1220-0185

CC: Dori Allard

From: Rachel Krantz-Kent

Stephanie Denton

Subject: Fielding the Well-Being Module in the 2013 American Time Use Survey

The American Time Use Survey (ATUS), conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS),

included a Well-Being (WB) module in 2010 and 2012. The module is funded by the

National Institute on Aging (NIA). The purpose of this request for review is to obtain clearance for a third wave of the Well-being Module to the ATUS, scheduled to be conducted for one year, starting in January 2013. OMB approval of the 2012 WB module expires on June 30, 2013. BLS is seeking OMB approval to begin collection of the 2013 WB module through this non-substantive change request. This will be followed by a full information collection request to secure clearance through June of 2014.

**ATUS Well-Being Module Background**

As part of the ATUS, the WB Module will survey individuals ages 15 and over from a nationally-representative sample of approximately 2,190 sample households each month. If approved, the WB Module questions will be asked immediately after the ATUS and will follow up on some of the information ATUS respondents provide in their time diary.

The proposed 2013 WB module is identical to the 2012 WB module. As with the 2010 and 2012 WB Module, the core of the proposed 2013 WB Module will collect data about how people experience their time, specifically how happy, tired, sad, stressed, and in pain they felt yesterday. Respondents will be asked these questions about three randomly-selected activities from the time diary; a few activities, such as sleeping and private activities, will never be selected. The module also will collect data on whether people were interacting with anyone while doing the selected activities, how meaningful the activities were to them, and some general health questions. Like the 2012 WB Module, the proposed 2013 version will also include two questions to collect data about individuals' life satisfaction and their emotional experience yesterday.

**Reasons to Collect Well-Being Data**

The data from the proposed WB Module support the BLS mission of providing relevant information on economic and social issues. While the core ATUS provides information about how people spend their time, the WB Module provides information about how they experience their time. The data provide a richer description of daily activities such as work. For example, they can be used to measure how workers feel (tired, stressed, in pain) during work episodes compared to non-work episodes, and how often workers interact on the job. The data also can be used to measure whether the amount of pain workers experience varies by occupation and disability status.

Data on life satisfaction provide more comprehensive information about people’s well-being beyond the point-in-time information collected by the affect questions, and could be compared to the activity-level data. For example, data on life satisfaction could provide information about whether people who are more satisfied with their life spend their time differently than those who are not as satisfied. They also could be used as an indicator of the average well-being of various subpopulations, such as older Americans or those in poor health. Such information is important for public policy.

**Research using WB Module Data**

Data from the 2010 WB Module have only been available since November 2011; however, they already are being used in several research applications. Some examples include: [[1]](#footnote-1)

* Time-Use, Emotional Well-Being, and Unemployment: Krueger and Mueller (2012) used ATUS WB Module survey data in their analysis of differences in the time-use and emotional well-being of employed and unemployed workers.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* Episode-based pain studies: Arthur Stone (Stony Brook University) and Angus Deaton (Princeton University) have recently begun work using the 2010 WB module data to

examine the hypothesis that people with different employment statuses (working/nonworking) and occupations (using standard labor categories) experience different levels of pain throughout the day—and not just on the job.

* Transportation studies: Archer et al (2012) used 2010 WB Module data to develop a multivariate model designed to measure how activity-travel episodes affect subjective well-being. They found that “activity duration, activity start time, and child

accompaniment significantly impact feelings of well-being for different activities” (including travel).[[3]](#footnote-3)

* Assessing Validity of Short Versions of the Day Reconstruction Method (DRM)-Vicki Freedman, Richard Gonzalez, Lindsay Ryan, Norbert Schwarz, Jacqui Smith, and

Robert Stawski, use ATUS WB Module data along with other survey data to compare DRM—which involves asking respondents to reconstruct and describe episodes of the previous day and the feelings they experienced during each—with shorter survey approaches that retain a subset of DRM features.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Reasons for collecting the WB Module for a third year**

A third year of ATUS Well-being module data will add significant information beyond what has been collected in 2010 and 2012. An additional year of the WB Module provides researchers with the ability to use larger samples by pooling data across years. For some purposes, the number of observations needed to make valid statistical inferences exceeds the annual sample size. This is especially true for comparing a self-reported well-being score across smaller population subgroups.

Further, the 2012 WB Module is the first version of the survey that asks the overall life satisfaction (evaluative) well-being questions. To examine the sensitivity of these measures and changes over time, at least one additional year of data collection is needed. A 2013 ATUS Well-being Module would double the sample size of respondents who have answered the evaluative well-being questions.

More generally, collecting the WB Module for a third year will help determine the value of developing national measures of well-being and encourage discussion of whether and how measures of subjective well-being can play a useful role in assessing the effects of public policies. A third year of WB Module data could also help answer questions about survey issues related to data quality and reliability (e.g., nonresponse bias, question ordering, context effects) should it be collected elsewhere on a more permanent basis.

**Estimate of Respondent Burden**

The estimated respondent burden for the proposed 2013 Well-being Module will be approximately 1,067 hours, identical to that of the 2012 WB module. The 2012 Well-being Module lasts an average of 5 minutes and will be completed by about 12,800 respondents by the end of 2012. An additional 533 burden hours have been included in this request to cover collection until the end of June 2013. The remaining burden will be included in the full information collection request to follow.

1. For more information about the research applications using ATUS WB Module data, please see “The Subjective Well-Being Module of the American Time Use Survey: Assessment for Its Continuation,” (2012). National Research Council of the National Academies. Washington, DC. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Krueger, A.B., and Mueller, A. (2012). Time use, emotional well-being and unemployment: Evidence from longitudinal data. *American Economic Review, 102*(3), 594–599. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Archer, M., Paleti, R., Konduri, K., and Pendyala, R. (2012). “Modeling the connection Between Activity-Travel Patterns and Subjective Well-Being. Submitted for Presentation and Publication, 92nd Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A brief description of this research in progress can be found at http://micda.psc.isr.umich.edu/project/detail/35382 (accessed July 17, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)