



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**

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

Maryland 20782

Dear

I am writing to request your participation in the National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS) conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). NHCS brings together several longstanding data sources, including the National Hospital Discharge Survey, National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey. Together, these sources cover information on inpatient discharges and visits to emergency departments (EDs), outpatient departments (OPDs), and ambulatory surgery locations (ASLs). In addition to improved efficiency, consolidation also minimizes the burden on facilities. We also collect patient identifiers for discharges so that we can link to birth and death records and potentially link to data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). In 2013 Uniformed Bill (UB-04) claims data will be collected electronically and additional ED, OPD, and ASL data will be collected via abstraction.

Participation in NHCS is completely voluntary. You or your staff may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Your participation allows us to more accurately describe hospitals like yours in our national statistics and helps us to continue to serve as a resource to the hospital community, health care researchers, and policy makers. To help cover the cost of the set-up, we will offer participating hospitals a one-time reimbursement of \$500. Participating hospitals also will receive a \$500 reimbursement for each year that claims data collection is completed. Also hospitals with eligible EDs, OPDs and/or ASLs we get an additional \$500 reimbursement for each year that ambulatory data collection is completed.

No information collected in this study will be published in any manner that will allow identification of individual hospitals or patients. 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 an Institutional Review Board (IRB), both of which apply to this study. The IRB at CDC's NCHS has reviewed and approved all aspects of this study. Included in the enclosures is the "Frequently Asked Questions". 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 research and 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)].

The NCHS has contracted with Westat, a longstanding research organization, to assist in this task. A representative from Westat will telephone you to arrange for an appointment to discuss the possibility of your hospital's participation in the NHCS. If you have questions, please feel free to call Kathy Chimes, Westat Project Director for NHCS, at (301) 251-4302 or Dr. Carol DeFrances, Team Leader of the Hospital Care Team at NCHS, at (301) 458-4440.

Sincerely,

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

Enclosures