

Attachment S -- AHRQ's Response to Public Comments

Response to comment from Mr. Ferguson, Self-Insurance Institute of America:

We appreciate the Institute's suggestion for a revised wording of the new survey question, "What is the specific stop-loss coverage amount per employee?"

The wording of this question is based on recommendations from a Technical Expert Panel (TEP) convened by the office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), Department of Health and Human Services to advise the department on a number of issues regarding self-insured coverage. The panel included senior representatives from the self-insurance industry, third-party administrators, actuaries, government regulators, and survey managers from the Employee Benefit Research Institute and the Kaiser Family Foundation. The panel provided suggestions for improving the initial draft of this question and the updated question was then tested on a sample of MEPS-IC respondents that offered a self-insured plan. This testing resulted in additional modifications to the question.

Based on the testing and resulting modifications, we are confident that the proposed wording will be understood by survey respondents. However, we appreciate the Institute's comments and will provide the alternative wording to our data collection staff at the Census Bureau for use in responding to follow-up questions from respondents. Depending on the results of the 2013 collection, the wording of this question may be reassessed prior to the 2014 survey.

Response to comment from Dennis Fixler, Chief Statistician of the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

We greatly appreciate the continued support for the MEPS-IC survey from Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and we recognize the importance of informing the Bureau of any changes made to the survey.

All additional questions proposed for the survey must be pretested prior to being incorporated in the forms. While it is too late to pretest any additional questions for the 2013 MEPS-IC survey, we will plan to test the Bureau's proposed question - the percent of the total amount paid for optional coverage services that was paid by the employer - for possible addition to the 2014 MEPS-IC survey.