

Supporting Statement – Part B

Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

Medicare.gov/CMS.gov Websites

1. Results of this follow-up study will measure the progress achieved in improving areas of the websites identified in the previous studies.

As in the previous studies, this project involves surveying (intercepting) website visitors as they are visiting the CMS.gov and Medicare.gov websites. Visitors to these sites will be randomly selected and then asked to respond to questions about the sites' navigability, content, interactivity, performance, available publications, and privacy policy. Using the same method, the previous studies provided benchmark measurements on the attributes of each of the above websites. The results of the previous studies identified where website improvements should be made in order to have the largest impact on visitor experience. The follow-up study proposed in this submission will measure the effect of these website improvements on enhancing visitor experiences.

The potential respondent universe will be the universe of visitors perusing selected pages of the websites during a specified time period. This universe will be sampled on a probabilistic basis. Based on historic visitor counts, an estimated sample size designed to achieve the precision requirements of the study will be determined. Using this expected sample size along with a pre-determined "window" for data collection, a probability-based sample of visitors will be randomly selected via JavaScript from the specified web pages. Survey invitations will be set to trigger for visitors who had visited at least four different pages during their visit. Based on the initial study, the sampling rate is expected to be approximately 30 percent of visitors. That is, one in five visitors using a JavaScript enabled browser will receive the survey invitation. For non-JavaScript enabled browsers, a fixed link invitation will be visible.

2. For the purposes of this study, the sample design is simple random sampling. There is no stratification involved. The estimation procedures are designed to produce simple, standard descriptive statistics consistent with a sampling scheme based on simple random sampling.

As with the prior studies, we estimate the number of completed interviews for this study to be approximately 7,000 visitors. Accordingly, we expect estimates produced from this survey to have very small levels of sampling error and that small differences (one point or less) will be able to be detected between rounds of the survey.

We expect to be able to measure differences in index scores (e.g., average score for questions about site characteristics such as "navigability" or "content" based on a scale of 1 to 100) between two rounds of the survey, with differences as small as 0.90 points (i.e., within less than one point between rounds) using a two-tailed test at the .05 level of significance.

We do not expect any unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures or any use of periodic data collection cycles.

3. This survey is very different from other traditional surveys by its very nature. One major difference is that no attempt will be made to convert initial non-respondents. Traditional surveys often have extensive callback efforts and/or reminder letters for converting initial refusals. However, due to the nature of intercepting website visitors in a probabilistic manner, the initial attempt to induce response will be the only contact ever made with the potential respondent. Once the respondent refuses the initial survey invitation, no other contact is made. After all, we do not want to unduly interfere with the real reason the sampled visitor is visiting the website in the first place. In surveys of this type, the data are used to point to specific problems (or dissatisfaction) visitors have when using the either site. We think that 30% response rate is good for this type of survey.

4. No tests of procedures or methods are being proposed for this study. This study will use methods that have been demonstrated to be an effective means of surveying CMS.gov website and the Medicare.gov website. Please note that the Medicare.gov website was tested in 2002, 2003 and 2004 using this exact same methodology. Since the 2001 Medicare.gov research was the first time this type of web intercept survey was used to test a CMS website, a pretest of the survey methodology was conducted. Pretest results were used to refine the intercept survey prior to the 2002 Medicare.gov website testing. The same survey was used again for Medicare.gov in 2003 and in 2007.

5. Please contact either of the following CMS contacts regarding the statistical and methodological aspects of the design or for agency information:

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