

This letter is to inform you of our plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). The Census Bureau plans to conduct telephone respondent pretest interviews on additional proposed questions for the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey – Insurance Component (MEPS-IC), which is a self-administered mail out/mail return survey conducted by the Census Bureau for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) on an annual basis. The MEPS-IC collects information on health insurance expenditures from a sample of establishments on the national business register, as well as a sample of government units. Data from the survey are used to create national and state level estimates on employer sponsored health insurance coverage. This survey is collected under the authority of Title 13, United States Code (U.S.C.), and Section 8(b) and Section 913 of the Public Health Service Act (Title 42, U.S.C., Section 299b-2). Further information regarding the MEPS-IC can be found at this website: https://meps.ahrq.gov/survey_comp/Insurance.jsp

The purpose of this pretest is to obtain additional data on businesses and government units that offer multiple insurance plans to their employees. The pretest includes follow-up questions relating to the eligibility of employees for certain plans, employee contributions to the plans, and the availability of plans for dependents. Researchers examining dependent coverage can look at single, employee-plus-one, and family of 4 coverage in the MEPS-IC, but information is lacking on other additional levels of dependent coverage. Recent research shows that some employers will sometimes offer employee-plus-one coverage, but not family coverage, and may tailor benefits to the size of workers' families but this information is unavailable in the MEPS-IC. This behavior with respect to health insurance benefits is obviously an important issue under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Respondents will be asked these questions for up to four insurances plans they reported on their original response to the MEPS form. The results will be recorded and tabulated and a report produced that outlines the findings of the pretest and discusses the possibility of adding new questions in subsequent survey years.

Starting in October 2016, staff from the Census Bureau's Health Surveys Branch (HSB) will conduct a maximum of 50 telephone interviews. A larger number of establishments will be selected and contacted with the expectation of achieving 50 pretest responses. Training of the HSB staff will be conducted by a member of the Data Collection Methodology & Research Branch of the Census Bureau, who will oversee the work of the HSB staff and may also conduct a small number of interviews. Cases to be selected for this pretest will include responding units from the 2016 MEPS survey and will be focused on large sized employers that offered four or more different health plans. Cases will be selected to cover both private and government establishments.

Respondents will be informed that their participation is voluntary. Monetary incentives for participation will not be offered. The interviews will not be audio recorded.

Enclosed are a copy of the current MEPS-IC questionnaires, and a draft of the respondent pretest protocol.

We expect that each interview will last no more than 20 minutes (50 cases x 20 minutes per case = 16.67 hours). Additionally, to recruit respondents we expect to make up to 5 phone contacts

per completed case. The recruiting calls are expected to last on average 3 minutes per call (5 attempted phone calls per completed case x 50 cases x 3 minute per case = 12.5 hours). Thus, the estimated burden for this project is 29.17 hours (16.67 hours for interviews + 12.5 hours for recruiting).

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and analysis of the pretest is listed below:

Kristin Stettler
Data Collection Methodology & Research Branch
Economic Statistics and Methodology Division
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20233
(301) 763-7596
Kristin.j.stettler@census.gov

Cc:

William Bostic	(ADEP) with enclosure
Nick Orsini	(ADEP) with enclosure
Carol Caldwell	(ESMD) with enclosure
Carma Hogue	(ESMD) with enclosure
Diane Willimack	(ESMD) with enclosure
Amy Riemer	(ESMD) with enclosure
Kristin Stettler	(ESMD) with enclosure
Marleen Livesay	(HSB) with enclosure
Susanna Winder	(HSB) with enclosure
Edwin Pome	(HSB) with enclosure
Jennifer Hunter Childs	(ADRM) with enclosure
Mary Davis	(ADRM) with enclosure
Danielle Norman	(PCO) with enclosure
Jeanette Greene-Bess	(PCO) with enclosure
Karen Davis	(AHRQ) with enclosure (Karen.Davis@ahrq.hhs.gov)
David Kashihara	(AHRQ) with enclosure (David.Kashihara@ahrq.hhs.gov)