Generic Clearance Collection Request:
Cognitive Testing for Additional Questions on the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey –
Insurance Component

Request: 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. 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

Purpose: The purpose of this pretest is to determine the quality of proposed questions that would collect additional data from businesses and government units that offer multiple insurance plans to their employees. The draft questions relate to the provision of services for treatment of critical illnesses, the provision of health risk assessments, contributions towards health reimbursement arrangements (HRAs) and health savings accounts (HSAs), and the use of telemedicine. Respondents will be asked these questions for up to four insurance plans they reported on their original response to the MEPS form. A report will be produced that outlines the findings of the pretest and discusses the possibility of adding these new questions in subsequent survey years.

Population of Interest: The population of interest is respondents to the MEPS survey. MEPS is an annual sample survey, with the sample consisting of approximately 40,000 private industry establishments and 4,000 state and local governments. Data from the survey are used to create national and state level estimates on employer-sponsored health insurance coverage. These estimates are used to track industry trends and examine how these trends have changed health insurance coverage over time. Policymakers at the national and state level use the data to assess the status of employer-sponsored health insurance throughout the U.S. and monitor the impact of laws governing health insurance. Researchers, policy analysts, and other government agencies also use the data for a variety of analyses.

Timeline: Testing will occur in November 2017.

Language: Testing will be conducted in English only.

Method: 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.

Sample: We plan to conduct up to 50 interviews. We will contact potential participants via phone, explain the nature of our research, and ask them to participate in our study. The sample of participants will be those who are able to be contacted and who agree to participate in the study. Efforts will be made to sample respondents from a variety of sizes and types (i.e., industries) of businesses, though the sample will ultimately be dependent on who chooses to participate in the research. Participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by Census Bureau employees. Respondents who are interested in participating will be given the choice of scheduling the interview for a future date, or having the interview take place at that moment. For respondents who opt to schedule for a future date, researchers will send respondents a confirmation via email, and may conduct reminder calls a few days before the interview.

Recruitment: Cases to be selected for this pretest will include responding units from the 2017 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 industry establishments and government establishments. Respondents will be informed that their participation is voluntary. The interviews will not be audio recorded.

Use of incentives: Monetary incentives for participation will not be offered.

Length of interview: 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).

Enclosures: Enclosed are a copy of the current MEPS-IC questionnaires, and a draft of the respondent pretest protocol, which includes the proposed new questions. (The MEPS-10 and MEPS-10S are for privates and the MEPS-11 and MEPS-11S are for governments. The 's' stands for plan supplement. The respondent fills out an 's' form for each health care plan.)

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

Kenneth Herrell
Data Collection Methodology & Research Branch
Economic Statistics and Methodology Division
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20233
(301) 763-2197
kenneth.herrell@census.gov

CC:

Ron Jarmin	(DIR) with enclosures	
Nick Orsini	(DIR)	" "
Carol Caldwell	(ESMD)	" "
Diane Willimack	(ESMD)	" "
Amy Anderson Riemer	(ESMD)	" "
Kristin Stettler	(ESMD)	" "
Kenneth Herrell	(ESMD)	" "
Carma Hogue	(ESMD)	" "
Danielle Norman	(PCO)	" "
Mary Lenaiyasa	(PCO)	" "
Jennifer Hunter Childs	(ADRM)	" "
Jasmine Luck	(ADRM)	" "
Marleen Livesay	(HSB)	" "
Susanna Winder	(HSB)	" "
Edwin Pome	(HSB)	" "
Karen Davis	(AHRQ)	" " (Karen.Davis@ahrq.hhs.gov)
David Kashihara	(AHRQ)	" " (David.Kashihara@ahrq.hhs.gov)