

## **Attachment 6 - NHIS Methodological Projects for 2017**

The Division of Health Interview Statistics (DHIS) is in the process of redesigning the NHIS questionnaire, for a planned implementation of the new survey instrument beginning in January 2018. To inform and support decision making, a number of short, web- and/or mail-based, quick-turnaround methodological, cognitive and field testing projects are anticipated for 2017. Collectively, these projects are represented in line 5 of the burden table.

The aims of these projects are to test new and updated questionnaire items, evaluate the impact of different response options on answer choices, and measure respondents' comprehension of health care-related terms and concepts. To this end, these projects will build on information learned in prior NHIS follow-back surveys and methodological research. We outline research below.

### **Research using a commercial web panel**

Respondents from commercial web panels can be used to test conceptual understanding of key terms in surveys. DHIS previously tested web panel respondents' comprehension of key terms related to health insurance and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) through a brief web questionnaire that took approximately 10 minutes to complete. For example, respondents were asked questions to measure their understanding of deductibles, co-pays, and premiums. DHIS also asked respondents questions about their knowledge of and familiarity with different aspects of the ACA including the "Health Insurance Marketplace" and healthcare.gov website. The findings from the web panel were used to improve questions on health insurance. We would like to continue to use this method to aid in the development of new and revised content in the redesigned questionnaire.

### **Follow-back surveys with NHIS respondents**

DHIS has obtained e-mail addresses from respondents who completed the NHIS. This information can be used to recontact NHIS respondents to participate in additional follow-back surveys where we can test new versions of survey questions. This would involve testing components of the full NHIS instrument with new or revised content. Follow-back surveys of NHIS participants have been used in the past to test survey questions related to the ACA. We would use follow-back surveys to explore the following research questions:

1. How does alternate question wording affect respondent comprehension of the constructs to be measured?
2. What is the test/retest reliability of newly-developed questions?
3. What are preferred answer choices for categorical questions?
4. What probes (*e.g.*, time frames or date ranges) work best to promote recall of medical visit dates?

The sample for these projects will consist of current- and prior-year (2013-2017) NHIS respondents who provided a valid email address and are not in the MEPS sample. NCHS has several thousand email addresses.

### **Lab and field pretesting**

Cognitive testing may be used to understand how respondents interpret new and revised survey questions for the redesigned survey. DHIS can use the cognitive lab through the Collaborating Center for Question Design and Evaluation Research (CCQDER) at NCHS to conduct this testing. These projects typically involve recruiting 20-30 research participants through advertisements to visit the lab. An interviewer administers the questions and

observes the participants' answers. The interviewer will then ask follow-up questions to understand how the participants processed the question and any problems that the respondent had answering the survey questions.

A dress-rehearsal field pretest may also be used to test components of the redesigned questionnaire. A field pretest gives DHIS an opportunity to test the design and operational aspects of the survey prior to full-scale implementation of the redesigned survey. DHIS staff would examine a number of data points from the pretest such as the input/output specifications, item distributions, skip patterns, and item nonresponse to understand how well the survey is working. Respondent and interviewer debriefings may also be used to identify any problems with the survey questions or flow of the instrument.