DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

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Eunice Kennedy Shriver National
Institute of Child Health and
Human Development
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

NICHD, Population Dynamics Branch

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Anjani Chandra, Ph.D.
NSFG Principal Investigator
Division of Vital Statistics
National Center for Health Statistics
3311 Toledo Road
Hyattsville, MD 20782

Dear Dr. Chandra:

I am pleased to provide information about how the NICHD plans to use the data that will be collected in the upcoming rounds of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG). Programming for the survey is an example of coordination across multiple components of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and we anticipate continuing to provide funding for implementation of the NSFG into the future. This response primarily reflects the interests of the NICHD Population Dynamics Branch (PDB); however, other branches within the NICHD Division of Extramural Research also benefit from use of the NSFG data. For example, the Contraception Research Branch uses data on the uptake and continued use of various contraceptive methods and the Fertility and Infertility Branch uses data on the prevalence of infertility and various methods of treatment. Because of the nationally representative sample used by the NSFG, the NICHD Office of Health Equity and the Gynecologic Health & Disease and Pregnancy & Perinatology Branches are able to fulfill their mission in documenting disparities in reproductive and perinatal health outcomes by socioeconomic status and race and ethnicity. Looking forward, staff from the NICHD's National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are conducting an on-going conversation about the need for collaboration on nationwide data about pregnancy among the U.S. population with disabilities. Because the NSFG includes the DHHS standard questions on disability along with detailed information on fertility, this survey is a key component of those discussions.

The PDB relies heavily on population-representative data from principal statistical agencies that compose the U.S. federal statistical system to guide activities relevant to its mission: supporting research on the scientific study of human populations, including fertility, nuptiality, family demography, population growth and decline, and the causes and consequences of demographic change, as well as supporting behavioral and social science research on sexually

transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, family planning, and infertility. Over the years, the NSFG has provided essential information on women's and men's fertility, family change, and reproductive health that has shaped programmatic activities and has provided a data resource for analysts seeking to describe and understand demographic behaviors and trends. NSFG data also provide a window into same-sex behavior and identity which supports the NIH's Plans for Advancing LGBT Health Research which were announced by NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins in January 2013 (http://www.nih.gov/about/director/01032013_lgbt_plan.htm).

NICHD would like to thank NSFG staff for providing opportunities for the scientific community to weigh in on potential changes to the NSFG by holding a series of research conferences and funders meetings. A recent notable change has been the transition to continuous interviewing, which has been extraordinarily successful. Data are now regularly updated and quickly disseminated to the research community. The continuous interviewing also allows NSFG staff to conduct experiments to increase response rates and to update and add items to meet the current needs of the scientific community.

The 2011-2019 data collection provides the NICHD with essential data to inform the evaluation and development of NICHD funding priorities in reproductive health, and provides an important resource for extramural scientists supported by NICHD. We thank the NCHS for continuing this important research endeavor.

Sincerely,

Rosalind King, Ph.D.
Program Director, Population Dynamics Branch
Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

CC:	Rebecca L. Clark, Ph.D., Chief, Population Dynamics Branch, NICHD