

## **Data protection is word ONE with MEPS**

Nothing is more important to us than protecting the personal information you share with the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey field representative. That is why we take a number of steps to ensure that no unauthorized persons will EVER have access to information that identifies you as a MEPS participant.

- **Each computer is password protected** – Passwords are changed at regular intervals.
- **Information cannot be viewed or changed after the interview is complete** – Once the field representative completes the interview, he/she cannot review or change the information you provided.
- **No information that could identify survey participants is publicly released** – Information that could identify a survey participant is removed before the data is made available to the public.
- **Computer security is a major focus** – The field representative is trained to never leave the computer unattended or in plain view, even in a locked car. At home the computer is secured in an office and unavailable to other family members.
- **Pledge of confidentiality** – All contracting staff and government staff working on MEPS have signed an assurance of confidentiality agreement. If this assurance is violated, the violator is subject to penalties including fines and possible arrest.