

Attachment 8 – Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures remain unchanged, both for the main 2018 questionnaire as well as the bridge sample dress rehearsal. As in past years, under an interagency agreement, the U.S. Census Bureau is the data collection agent for the NHIS. NHIS data are collected by Census interviewers, primarily through personal visits to households and computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). As in the past, personal household visits may be supplemented with telephone data collection under certain circumstances: telephone interviews may be attempted when efforts to make personal contact have not been successful, when the respondent requests a telephone interview, when part of the interview needs to be completed and it is not possible to schedule another personal visit, or when road conditions or travel distances would make it difficult to schedule a personal visit.

The roughly 900 trained interviewers working on the NHIS are directed by survey supervisors in the six U.S. Census Bureau Regional Offices. Interviewers (also referred to as Field Representatives or FRs) receive initial and/or annual refresher training in common interviewing procedures, the concepts and procedures unique to the NHIS, and survey content changes.

Interviewers use official Census Bureau-furnished laptop computers equipped with Blaise software that presents the questionnaire on the computer screen. The Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) program guides the interviewer through the questionnaire, automatically routing the interviewer to appropriate questions based on answers to previous questions. Flashcards will no longer be used by interviewers to provide participants with long lists of response choices. Telephone data collection (when it occurs) does not allow for flashcard use; dropping them allows an interview that is consistent across modes. Many questions have been revised to have shorter lists of response choices that can be read out loud in their entirety by an interviewer.

Once an interviewer enters survey responses into the computer, the CAPI program determines if the selected response is within an allowable range, checks it for consistency against other data collected during the interview, and saves the responses into a survey data file.