

Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS)

Request for Approval of a Non-Substantive Change

OMB No. 0938-0568
(Expires 08/31/2022)

William S. Long
Contracting Officer's Representative, Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey
Office of Enterprise Data and Analytics (OEDA)/CMS
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop Mailstop B2-04-12
Baltimore, MD 21244
(410) 786-7927
william.long@cms.hhs.gov
(410) 786-5515 (fax)

February 7, 2020

Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS)

A1. Circumstances making the collection of information necessary

This request is for a non-substantive change to an approved data collection (OMB No. 0938-0568, expires 08/31/2022). The current clearance encompasses the MCBS Community questionnaire, Facility screener, and Facility instrument.

Non-substantive Change

This change request seeks approval to implement a non-substantive change to the MCBS advance letter sent to incoming panel members, beginning with Fall 2020 Round 88. The revised letter, approved on 12/3/2018 for testing under the MCBS Generic Clearance 0938-1275, was tested in Fall 2019 Round 85 and performed better than the control letter. The revised letter is more closely aligned with best practices regarding advance mailings, with clearer language to allow respondents to understand the purpose of the survey and upcoming interviewer visit.

OMB approval is needed by June 15, 2020 to allow for sufficient time to print and mail this letter to incoming panel sample ahead of their release beginning in July 2020. CMS requests approval to use a revised version of the advance letter moving forward. The revised letter is in Attachment A and the previously used letter (e.g., the control letter) is in Attachment B.

A2. Purpose and use of information collection

The purpose of this amendment is to implement a non-substantive change to the MCBS advance letter sent to incoming panel members starting in Fall 2020 Round 88. The MCBS advance letter is mailed to incoming panel sample members prior to the start of data collection each fall round. CMS and NORC collaborated to improve these mail materials with the goal of bringing the advance letter in line with best practices in the field of survey research and respondent communication. The revised advance letter that was tested in 2019 included simplifying letter text, highlighting the request for respondent participation, reducing extraneous information and agency references unfamiliar to the target audience, and formatting updates to modernize the letter. The content, meaning, and purpose of the letter did not change.

CMS' contractor, NORC at the University of Chicago, conducted an experiment in Fall 2019 to test the performance of sample receiving the new, revised letter against sample receiving the original, control letter. This experiment was conducted under the OMB Generic Clearance 0938-1275 and was approved by OMB on 12/3/2018 (as well as NORC's Institutional Review Board).

Results from this experiment were analyzed in early 2020 and the final report is included in Attachment C. CMS and NORC found that respondents receiving the revised letter had a significantly higher completion rate. All other metrics showed no significant difference

between groups at the end of data collection. Based on these findings, CMS is requesting OMB approval to use the revised letter in future data collection rounds beginning with mailings in July 2020.

Attachments:

- A – Revised Advance Letter
- B – Original (Control) Advance Letter
- C– Fall 2019 Advance Letter Experiment Report