



HIS-600R(L) LOS ANGELES  
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National Center for Health Statistics  
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Hyattsville, MD 20782

My name is Charles Rothwell. I am the Director of the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). We are a part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Our job is to collect information that can be used to better understand the health of Americans.

Every year we ask people questions about their health for a survey called the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). The survey started in 1957. Information from this survey tells us if the health of Americans is getting better or worse. We can also tell which groups of people in the United States are more likely to have certain health problems. This helps CDC and others develop programs to keep America healthy.

Our goal is to make sure that the survey represents the whole United States. The only way the survey can represent the whole country is if a computer picks addresses randomly. People who live at these addresses get to take part in the NHIS. This year, your address was picked!

**We want to hear from you!**

An interviewer from the U.S. Census Bureau will come to your home in the next few days. He or she will show you their Census Bureau ID. Then he or she will ask you a few questions to find out who lives at your address. Next, a computer will randomly pick one or more people for the health interview. The interviewer will talk to adults about their own health. The interviewer will talk to a family member about children's health. For most households, the interview will take less than an hour.

**We need your help!**

You are getting a special chance to make a difference in the health of the nation. You can choose whether or not you want to take the survey, and you do not have to answer every question. There are no penalties for refusing to answer questions. However, the information we collect is very important. We need your help to ensure that the survey results are complete and correct.

**We will protect your information!**

Everything you tell us is confidential. Your information is ONLY used for statistical research. We will remove any information that might be used to identify you from the data. After that, we will make the data available to anyone who wants to use it for research or to guide public health decisions. Question 6 on the back of this letter describes the laws that protect your privacy.

We hope you will take part in this survey.

If you have questions about the survey, please contact the Census Bureau, toll-free, at 1-800-992-3530, press 5. You can also call this number to schedule the interview. You can learn more about the survey at our website: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm>

I know your time is valuable. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Charles J. Rothwell  
Director, National Center for Health Statistics  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

REGIONAL OFFICE  
US CENSUS BUREAU

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NATIONAL HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY (NHIS)**

### **1. HOW WAS I CHOSEN FOR THE SURVEY?**

Your address was randomly selected by a computer from all of the addresses in the U.S. We do not know who lives at each address. Every month we pick between 5,300 and 5,500 home addresses across the entire country. Everyone has a chance to be picked. This process ensures that the addresses selected represent everyone in the United States.

### **2. WHY NOT INTERVIEW AT THE HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET? WHY IS MY PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?**

You are important! The people across the street are not the same as you. We cannot swap one address for another. If we did that, the survey results would not accurately describe the entire country.

### **3. I AM NOT SICK – WHY SHOULD I TAKE PART IN A HEALTH SURVEY?**

This is a survey of the Nation's health. We want to know how many people are sick and why they are sick. We also want to know how many people are healthy and what makes them healthy. Everyone's answers are important.

### **4. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO ASK ME?**

The NHIS asks about a lot of things. We will ask about doctor visits, medical conditions, health insurance, and other topics. We also ask questions to understand the health information you give us. For example, we ask about race and income. We will also ask if it is okay to combine your answers with information from other places, like medical records. Most people have no difficulty with any of the questions in the NHIS. However, others find some questions to be sensitive. You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to.

### **5. WHO WILL SEE MY ANSWERS?**

NCHS collects and uses information you provide in accordance with System of Records Notice 09-20-0164, Health and Demographic Surveys Conducted in Probability Samples of the United States (<https://www.cdc.gov/SORNnotice/09-20-0164.htm>). We take your privacy very seriously. We combine your answers with other people's answers in a way that keeps everyone's identity secret. As required by federal law, your identity can be seen only by those NCHS employees and specially designated agents (such as the U.S. Census Bureau) who need that information for a specific reason. No one else can see your answers until all information that could identify you and/or your family has been removed.

### **6. WHAT LAWS PROTECT MY PRIVACY?**

Congress authorized the NHIS data collection in Section 306 of the Public Health Service Act (42 United States Code 242k). Strict federal laws prevent us from releasing information that could identify you or your family to anyone else without your permission. These laws are: Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 242m(d)); the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA, Title 5 of Public Law 107-347); and the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a). Every National Center for Health Statistics employee, contractor, research partner, and agent has taken an oath to keep your information private. Anyone who willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about ANYONE in the survey could get a jail term of up to five years, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015 (6 U.S.C. §§ 151 & 151 note), your data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit your data.

### **7. WHO PROTECTS THE INTERESTS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS?**

Every year, the Research Ethics Review Board (ERB) of the National Center for Health Statistics reviews survey content and methods to protect study participants. You may call the Research Ethics Review Board to ask about your rights as a participant in this research study. The toll-free number is 1-800-223-8118. You will get an answering service. Please leave a brief message with your name and phone number. Say you are calling about Protocol # 2015-08. Your call will be returned promptly.