

# **Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS)**

Request for Approval of a Non-Substantive Change

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

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## 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 materials that will be sent to new Incoming Panel members for the Fall 2020 Round 88. The current advance materials include a single mailing notifying sampled Medicare beneficiaries that they have been selected for the survey and will be contacted in-person by a field interviewer. The beneficiary receives both an advance letter and a brochure.

This non-substantive change continues to use advance notification but specifies that selected beneficiaries will participate by phone. Based on past experience using electronic database searches, telephone numbers will initially be available for approximately 55 percent of beneficiaries. Therefore, two additional advance mailings—a reminder letter and a final reminder postcard—will be used, along with locating and tracing efforts to increase the availability of phone numbers and maximize response.

As always, data collection for the fall round begins toward the end of July in order to have time to locate the sample and gain cooperation. This year, Fall 2020 Round 88 begins on July 22, 2020; the first advance notification will begin on or about July 12, 2020. OMB approval is needed by June 15, 2020 to allow sufficient time to print and mail these materials. CMS expects to return to in-person interviewing in 2021 and therefore, only requests this non-substantive change for the Fall 2020 Round 88. The revised materials are in Attachment A.

### **A2. Purpose and use of information collection**

MCBS data collection is traditionally conducted in-person. Each year beginning in July, CMS pulls an extract of Medicare beneficiaries from the CMS administrative enrollment data. Beneficiaries are then sampled from that extract and added to the MCBS each fall round. The CMS administrative enrollment data contains the beneficiary's name and address; it does not include a telephone number or an email address.

CMS' data collection contractor, NORC at the University of Chicago, typically conducts outreach and interviewing in-person, either at the beneficiary's home (e.g., a Community interview) or with a facility administrator (a Facility interview) if the beneficiary is living in a long-term care facility. Prefield locating activities (including electronic database searches using LexisNexis® Accurint®) are always run on the Incoming Panel to verify or update addresses and to obtain telephone numbers when available.

The purpose of this amendment is to implement a non-substantive change to the MCBS advance materials sent to these new panel members (referred to as the Incoming Panel). The reason for the non-substantive change is the decision to shift to telephone outreach and interviewing for the remainder of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The revised advance mail materials notify selected beneficiaries that an interviewer will be contacting them by telephone to conduct an interview; they also provide a toll free number and email address for beneficiaries to use to schedule an interview.

Included in Attachment A are the following materials:

1. First Mailing:
  - o An update to the standard community advance letter with text to address phone interviewing;
  - o An update to the standard facility advance letter with text to address phone interviewing
  - o An update to the standard brochure with a small text change to address phone interviewing
2. Second Mailing (about 14-21 days from the first mailing)
  - o A reminder second advance letter
3. Third Mailing (about 21-28 days from the first mailing)
  - o A reminder postcard as a final attempt to contact the respondent. To ensure privacy, this card will be a folded, sealed card with text that includes the name of the study only on the inside.

Attachments:

A – Updated Advance Materials to Reflect Telephone Contact