

Emergency Clearance Request
Temporary Extraordinary Circumstances Exception for
ASPA COVID-19 Outcome Evaluation Surveys
(OMB #####-New)

Summary:

In light of the current COVID-19 crisis, there is an immediate need to inform U.S. adults on scientifically proven behaviors to decrease COVID-19 infection rates through a COVID-19 public education communication campaign. These preventative behaviors, to be targeted through the ASPA COVID-19 campaign, include COVID-19 vaccine uptake, social distancing, wearing a mask, handwashing, as well as COVID-19-related clinical trial participation and flu vaccination uptake. Accordingly, there is a need to evaluate the extent to which the COVID-19 campaign influences key attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, to ensure campaign outcomes are achieved in target populations.

Two surveys will be administered to evaluate the efficacy of the ASPA COVID-19 campaign, the COVID-19 Attitudes and Beliefs Survey (CABS), a longitudinal, tri-annual survey, and the Monthly Outcome Survey (MOS), a cross-sectional survey. Both surveys are essential for evaluating the short- and long-term effects of the ASPA COVID-19 campaign, as there are no other surveys currently collection such information, and there is an imminent need to evaluate COVID-19 vaccine uptake among U.S. adults. The CABS entails the collection of baseline survey data during the initial wave of data collection, just prior to and/or during the initial rollout of campaign messages. The collection of such baseline survey data is critical to conducting a strong outcome evaluation of recommended preventative behavior, necessitating the timely provision of emergency clearance. The MOS, administered monthly throughout the campaign, is necessary for measuring crucial campaign outcomes at a more granular level (i.e., through monthly assessments). The MOS will track awareness and reception of campaign communications and inform mid-stream adaptations of public health education materials to best inform the American public on how to take protective actions against COVID-19. Thus, the expedited clearance of the CABS and MOS is critical to evaluating the efficacy of the ASPA COVID-19 campaign and informing ongoing communication efforts. Therefore, we ask that OMB consider the emergency clearance process to allow implementation of the CABS and MOS surveys.

Background:

As the lead office providing communication counsel for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA) is responsible for inspiring confidence and persuading Americans to persevere through and recover from one of the worst crises in our history. To address this need, ASPA launched the *HHS COVID-19 Public Education Campaign*, a campaign to increase vaccine confidence and reinforce basic prevention measures. This campaign includes an evaluation component that is

designed to use scientifically rigorous approaches and multiple data sources to assess campaign performance on three levels: outcome, process, and program monitoring. This approach will assess the potential campaign-attributable impact on changes in health, behaviors, intentions, attitudes, and beliefs. It will also provide intelligence early and often to inform mid-stream adaptations in campaign strategy, tactics, and the underlying campaign theory of change. Multiple feedback mechanisms will support continuous campaign learning and performance improvement. The evaluation component of this campaign is shaped by health behavior theory (e.g., health belief model, theory of planned behavior, transtheoretical/stages of change model, dual-process model, and the social ecological models) and extant research on behavioral factors for COVID-related transmission prevention behaviors.