



February 21, 2021

FOR: MR. RON JARMIN, ACTING DIRECTOR OF THE CENSUS BUREAU

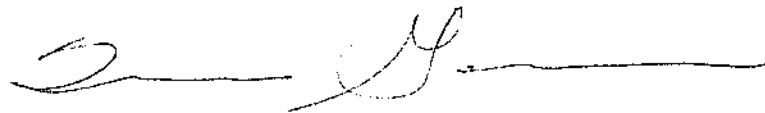
FROM: Susan Goldstein, Science Officer, COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, Centers for
Disease Control and Prevention

SUBJECT: Emergency Waiver under the Paperwork Reduction Act to add occupational
question to the Household Pulse Survey and modify the COVID-19 vaccine
intent question

- Supporting essential workers is a priority for the current Administration, as described in the National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness. Essential workers are specifically emphasized under Goal 2: Mount a safe, effective, comprehensive vaccination campaign and under Goal 5: Safely reopen schools, businesses, and travel, while protecting workers. In addition, under Goal 6, the National Strategy emphasizes the need to increase data collection and reporting for high risk groups.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) would greatly benefit from having data as soon as possible to respond to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and target outreach efforts to promote COVID-19 vaccine access and uptake among essential worker groups.
- CDC therefore requests that the Census Bureau pursue an emergency waiver from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for the public notice and comment requirements imposed by the Paperwork Reduction Act (as described in 5 CFR 1320.13) to revise the Household Pulse Survey in the next wave (March 2021). This revision would allow for the timely inclusion, while vaccine supply is limited, of demographic screener questions on the next wave of the Household Pulse Survey to classify respondents employed in “essential” worker groups for analysis.
- Essential worker groups are delineated by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) in their recommended phased allocation of COVID-19 vaccines.
- CDC is currently collecting basic data from jurisdictions about the persons to whom COVID-19 vaccines are administered, but occupational data are not included in the reporting requirements.
- While CDC has a robust survey program, we do not have a rapid survey capability other than use of existing private Internet panel surveys. CDC surveys often take a year or longer to design, administer, analyze, and report the results. Moreover, CDC does not typically have sampling frames the size and scope of those available through the Pulse survey. The inclusion of demographic screener questions on the Household Pulse Survey to identify respondents employed in “essential” worker groups would provide

the CDC with critical and timely information that it currently does not collect. The relatively large sample size and timeliness of the Pulse survey will increase the likelihood that there will be large enough subsamples of essential worker groups to draw meaningful conclusions while the emergency COVID-19 vaccination program is still ongoing.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected essential workers, such as healthcare personnel, first responders, and food and agriculture workers. Data from the Household Pulse Survey will allow CDC to enhance services and target resources to address the impact on these workers.
- Data from the Household Pulse Survey that includes demographic screener questions to identify respondents employed in “essential” worker groups would provide a vital data source to assess how essential worker groups are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts support the goals of the current Administration as outlined in the National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness.
- CDC is also requesting a change to the question on intent to receive COVID-19 vaccine. Currently the question forces respondents who may be uncertain about their plans to receive COVID-19 vaccination to choose between probably getting or probably not getting vaccinated. Adding a middle response option, e.g., “I have not decided whether I will get a vaccine” would allow these respondents to be identified and characterized to guide development of specific strategies to boost vaccine confidence in this group, both overall and among essential workers.

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