

Attachment M2: NAMCS 2021 Advance Letters



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

National Center for Health Statistics
3311 Toledo Road, Room 3409
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782

Physician letter Option 1

NAMCS Endorsing Organizations

American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing

American Academy of Dermatology

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Neurology

American Academy of Ophthalmology

American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

American College of Cardiology

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Physicians

American College of Preventive Medicine

American College of Surgeons

American Osteopathic Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Society of Clinical Oncology

American Society of Plastic Surgeons

American Urological Association

National Association of Community Health Centers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is conducting the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS). This annual study, which has been in the field since 1973, collects information about the large portion of ambulatory care provided by physicians and advanced practice providers throughout the United States. Statistical analysis using NAMCS helps to inform physicians, health care researchers, and policy makers about the changing characteristics of ambulatory health care in this country. The information that we will request includes data about patient visits (e.g., demographics, diagnoses, services, and treatments); physician practice characteristics (e.g., practice type); and use of electronic health records.

Many organizations and leaders in the health care community, including those providing the enclosed letter of endorsement, have expressed their support and join me in urging your participation in this meaningful study. You will be asked to allow the abstraction of a sample of about 30 patient encounters during a randomly assigned, 1-week reporting period. Additionally, there is a short interview (approximately 30 minutes) with you about the nature of your practice. We intend to conduct additional health care statistical analysis by linking National Provider Identifiers (NPIs) and Federal Tax Identification Numbers collected in this study to health care-related data such as Medicare records. In the weeks following the completion of this study, you may be contacted again for a 15-minute reinterview, which is conducted as a quality control measure. Participation is voluntary, and you or your staff may refuse to answer any question or stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

The following are some key points about the survey:

- Data collection for NAMCS is authorized by Section 306 of the Public Health Service Act (Title 42, U.S. Code, 242k).
- All information collected will be held in confidence according to Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 242m(d)) and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (Title III of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Pub. L. No. 115-435, 132 Stat. 5529 § 302)). This information will be used for statistical purposes only. No patient names, social security numbers, or addresses are collected.

NAMCS Endorsing Organizations

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American Society of Plastic Surgeons

American Urological Association

National Association of Community Health Centers

- In addition, NAMCS conforms to the Privacy Rule (45 CFR Part 160 and Subparts A and E of Part 164) as mandated by HIPAA (Public Law 104–191) because disclosure of patient data is permitted for public health purposes.
- U.S. Census Bureau employees, who administer the study, are required by law to keep all information about your practice and patients confidential.
- Disclosure of this information is also subject to all of the published routine uses as identified in the Privacy Act System of Records Notice 09-20-0167 Health Resources Utilization Statistics.

A Census Bureau employee, acting as our agent, will call you to schedule an appointment regarding the details of your participation. If you have any questions, please call a NAMCS representative at 1–800–392–2862. You can also find additional information on the survey by visiting the NAMCS participant website at: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/ahcd/namcs_participant.htm.

You may have questions about your rights as a participant in this study. If so, please call the Ethics Review Board at 1–800–223–8118. Please leave a brief message with your name and phone number and say that you are calling about Protocol 2016–03. Your call will be returned as soon as possible.

We greatly appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Brian C. Moyer, Ph.D.
Director



Physician letter Option 2

Dr. X, M.D.

You have been selected to participate in the 2020 National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS).

What is the NAMCS?

NAMCS is an annual survey of physicians in the United States conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The U.S. Census Bureau collects the data for NCHS. Since 1973, NAMCS data have informed physicians, health care researchers, and policy makers about the changing characteristics of ambulatory health care in this country. This helps us develop programs to keep America healthy. To learn more, see https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/ahcd/namcs_participant.htm.

Participation in NAMCS is voluntary. You or your staff may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Success of the study depends on the willingness of physicians like yourself to provide important data. In addition, there are many benefits for participation, including:



Why should I participate?

- **Help patients.** Policy makers use NAMCS data to ensure medical care is being provided to patients who need it, where they need it.
- **Help physicians.** Professional organizations endorse NAMCS and use its data to inform best practice guidelines for medical care providers.
- **Help other health care providers.** NAMCS data are used to improve training for health care workers, inform medical practice management, and evaluate quality of care.
- **Help your family members, friends, and community.** NAMCS data help researchers understand how we can achieve and sustain good health care practices we all want for ourselves and for the people we love.



What to do now

There is no need to do anything now. A Census Bureau interviewer, acting as our agent, will call you to schedule an appointment. The interviewer will also ask to collect information from about 30 patient encounters that should also only take a few minutes of your office staff's time. If you have any questions, please call a NAMCS representative at 1-800-392-2862.



What to expect

1. A U.S. Census Bureau interviewer (with a Census Bureau ID) will call your office.
2. He/she will ask you a few questions to determine if you are eligible to participate.
3. If you are eligible, he/she will schedule a time for the interview.
4. The interviewer will ask you or your office staff about physician practice characteristics. For most physicians, the survey interview will take less than 30 minutes. If you prefer, a knowledgeable member of your office staff may complete the interview for you.
5. Working with office staff, the interviewer will collect information on patient encounters during a randomly assigned 1-week period.

You Cannot be Replaced. We want the survey data to represent all physicians in the United States. We do that by interviewing a randomly selected sample of physicians. Only those selected can take part. We cannot replace you with another person.

Confidentiality Ensured. Everything you tell us is confidential. Your and your patients' information is ONLY used for statistical purposes. We remove all personally identifying information from the data. After that, the data are posted on the NAMCS website for future research and to guide public health decisions.

Thank you for participating in this important survey.

Sincerely,

Brian C. Moyer, PhD
Director, National Center for Health Statistics

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NATIONAL AMBULATORY MEDICAL CARE SURVEY (NAMCS)

1. HOW WAS I CHOSEN FOR THE SURVEY?

You were randomly selected from all nonfederal physicians in the U.S. who are engaged in office-based patient care. Every year we pick about 3,000 physicians across the entire country. All office-based physicians have a chance to be picked. This process ensures that the physicians selected represent all practitioners in the United States.

2. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO ASK ME?

NAMCS asks about a number of topics. Our U.S. Census Bureau interviewer will walk you through the entire process and do all the data collection using a computer-assisted interviewing instrument. Some examples of what we collect about you include general information about the office location(s) where you practice, types of direct patient care you provide, electronic health record (EHR) use, and patient care revenue. The interviewer will then also collect some information for about 30 patient encounters, such as patient's reason for visit, diagnosis, diagnostic and screening services, medication therapy, and expected source of payment. Most physicians have no difficulty with any of the questions in NAMCS; however, some might find some questions to be sensitive. You or your staff may choose not to answer any or all questions in this survey and can stop at any time. 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. You are getting a special chance to make a difference in the health of the nation.

3. CAN I COMPLETE THE SURVEY ONLINE?

One of the reasons NAMCS is the U.S. gold standard health care survey is that the data are collected by highly trained and skilled U.S. Census Bureau interviewers. There is currently no online option for NAMCS.

4. WHAT LAWS PROTECT MY PRIVACY?

Congress authorized NAMCS data collection in Section 306 of the Public Health Service Act (Title 42, U.S. Code, 242k). All information collected will be held in confidence according to Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 242m(d)) and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (Title III of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Pub. L. No. 115-435, 132 Stat. 5529 § 302). The data you provide will be used for statistical purposes only. No patient names, social security numbers, or addresses are collected. In addition, NAMCS conforms to the Privacy Rule (45 CFR Part 160 and Subparts A and E of Part 164) as mandated by HIPAA (Public Law 104-191) because disclosure of patient data is permitted for public health purposes, and the NCHS Ethics Review Board has approved NAMCS. Every NCHS 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.

5. WHO PROTECTS THE INTERESTS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS?

Every year, the Ethics Review Board 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 #2016-03. Your call will be returned promptly.

Proposed CHC Induction Letter



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Health Statistics

3311 Toledo Road
Hyattsville, Maryland 2078

Dear:

Your Community Health Center (CHC) location has been selected to participate in the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS). NAMCS collects information about the large portion of ambulatory care provided by physicians and advanced practice providers throughout the United States. Your CHC's participation is crucial to the success of this program! You can find details about NAMCS below.

What is NAMCS?

NAMCS is an annual survey of physicians in the United States conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Since 1973, NAMCS data have informed physicians, health care researchers, and policy makers about the changing characteristics of ambulatory health care in this country. This helps us develop programs to keep America healthy. The survey collects critical data (including patient identifiers) via your CHC's electronic health records (EHR) to produce national statistics on health care. To learn more, see https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/ahcd/namcs_participant.htm.

Why should your CHC participate?

Participation in NAMCS is voluntary. You or your staff may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Success of the study depends on the willingness of CHCs like yours to provide important data. In addition, there are many benefits for participation, including:

- **National Health Care Services Registry.** NAMCS is one of the collections working together with the CMS EHR Incentive Programs: Promoting Interoperability (PI) (formerly known as Meaningful Use) and the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS). Registration is free of charge.
- **Compensation.** Your CHC will be compensated for work done to set up EHR transmission to NCHS.
- **Help your family members, friends, and community.** NAMCS data help researchers understand how we can achieve and sustain good health care practices we all want for ourselves and for the people we love.

Is your CHC's data protected?

Information collected in this study will not be published in any manner that will allow identification of individual CHCs or patients. The Ethics Review Board (ERB) at CDC's NCHS has reviewed and approved all aspects of this study. Please be assured that we are required by law to keep all data regarding patients and facilities strictly confidential and to use these data only for research and statistical purposes.

What's next?

A representative from the recruitment contractor for NAMCS, will contact you soon to discuss how your CHC can participate. If you have any questions, please call a NAMCS representative at 1-800-392-2862. We look forward to working with you on this crucial data collection effort!

Sincerely,

Brian C. Moyer, PhD
Director, National Center for Health Statistics

You may have questions about your rights as a participant in this research study. If so, please call the National Center for Health Statistics ERB toll-free at 1-800-223-8118. Please leave a brief message with your name and phone number. Say that you are calling about Protocol #2016-03.

Proposed PI/MIPS Letter

Dear <fill name of organizational contact>,

Thank you for registering <fill name of the organization or provider> with the National Health Care Surveys to meet the public health registry reporting measure of the public health and clinical data exchange objective, under the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services electronic health record (EHR) incentive programs: Promoting Interoperability (PI) and/or the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS). The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is inviting Eligible Professionals (EPs) to participate in the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS) to fulfill their commitment to submit electronic data to the National Health Care Surveys. This annual study collects information about ambulatory care provided by physicians and midlevel providers throughout the United States. Research using NAMCS helps to inform physicians, health care researchers, and policy makers about the changing characteristics of ambulatory health care in this country.

The purpose of this letter is to invite your providers to participate in the NAMCS. Specifically, we are requesting patient electronic health record (EHR) data from encounters with the following physicians:

Physician Name, NPI, and specified reporting week
Physician Name, NPI, and specified reporting week
Physician Name, NPI, and specified reporting week

To begin this process, please email HCS-Support@cdc.gov to schedule a telephone conference call within the next 30 days.

Included in this FedEx is a document titled “Preparing and Submitting Test Data for Validation to NCHS”, which provides an overview of the testing and validation process. Data will be submitted to NCHS from your EHR.

The following are some key points about the survey:

- Data collection for NAMCS is authorized by Section 306 of the Public Health Service Act (Title 42, U.S. Code, 242k).
- All information collected will be held in the strictest confidence according to Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42, U.S.C. 242m(d)) and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (Title III of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Pub. L. No. 115-435, 132 Stat. 5529 § 302)). This information will be used for statistical purposes only.
- NAMCS conforms to the Privacy Rule (45 CFR Part 160 and Subparts A and E of Part 164) as mandated by HIPAA because disclosure of patient data is permitted for public health purposes.

You may have questions about your rights as a participant in this research study. If so, please call the Research Ethics Review Board at 1-800-223-8118. Please leave a brief message with your name and phone number and say that you are calling about Protocol 2016-03. Your call will be returned as soon as possible.

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Sincerely,

Brian C. Moyer, Ph.D.
Director, National Center for Health Statistics