

# National Hospital Care Survey Overview



## Background

The National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS) collects data on patient care in hospital-based settings to describe patterns of health care delivery and utilization in the United States. NHCS hospital-based settings include inpatient, emergency (EDs), and outpatient departments (OPDs). The survey will provide hospital utilization statistics for the Nation. In addition, the NHCS will also be able to monitor national trends in substance use-related ED visits including opioid visits.

## Purpose

Objective and timely data are essential to assess the health and well-being of the population and the performance and functioning of the health care system. NHCS data will allow health care decisionmakers, policymakers, and researchers to track the latest trends affecting hospitals and health care organizations; study the relationships between the organization and delivery of health care; and benchmark hospitals against the national data. Additionally, NHCS collects patient-level identifiers that allow a patient's episodes of care to be linked between different hospital inpatient and outpatient settings, as well as to outside databases such as the National Death Index, providing a more complete picture of patient care.

## Participation

Your hospital was randomly selected to provide nationally representative data on hospital utilization. Each hospital selected for the survey uniquely represents facilities of similar size, service type, and/or geographic location. Participation is voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating. The success of the study depends on the willingness of health care professionals to provide information on current health care services in the United States.

Currently, participation in NHCS includes a brief interview to determine the eligibility of the hospital and its ED; completion of an annual questionnaire; and electronic submission of all inpatient discharges and ED visit data. OPD visit data may be requested in future years.

Your hospital can submit electronic data for all inpatient discharges and ED visits in one of two ways:

- Submit files from your electronic health record (EHR) system. We can discuss this option more thoroughly during a conference call with your staff.
- Provide an electronic submission of your Uniform Bill (UB-04) administrative claims data or an electronic file in the same format as the file submitted to the state.



## Benefits to Participation

- 1 Selected summaries of your hospital's inpatient discharges and ED visit data showing health care utilization statistics, such as patient demographics, diagnoses/procedures, and length of stay, will be provided. Additionally, an online interactive report portal is currently under construction and will be available to participating hospitals in future years.
- 2 Health information management staff at your hospital are eligible for continuing education credits for taking the time to learn about the survey at: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/training/nhcs/index.html>.
- 3 Community Benefit. Non-profit hospitals participating in NHCS may be eligible for a tax exemption. For more information about this community benefit, please visit: [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs/community\\_benefit.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs/community_benefit.htm).
- 4 Access to the National Health Care Services Registry. The National Health Care Surveys are working together with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs: Promoting Interoperability (PI) (formerly known as Meaningful Use), and the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS). Registration is free of charge. [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/dhcs/nhcs\\_registry\\_landing.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/dhcs/nhcs_registry_landing.htm).

## Sponsorship

This project is sponsored by NCHS, which is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The mission of NCHS is to provide statistical information that will guide actions and policies to improve the health of the American people. As the Nation's principal health statistics agency, NCHS leads the way with accurate, relevant, and timely data. More information about NCHS can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/>.

All information that would permit identification of an individual or hospital participating in this survey is kept strictly confidential. Survey participants receive assurance of this confidentiality under the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 242m (d)) and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (Pub. L. No. 115-435, 132 Stat. 5529 § 302).

All project staff members have signed confidentiality agreements and are prohibited by law from using the information they receive for anything other than this project. Any other use is a violation of federal law and is subject to heavy fines and imprisonment. Compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and its Privacy Rule (PL-104-191 and 45 CFR Part 160 and Part 164, subparts A and E) allows hospitals to disclose protected health information without patient authorization for public health purposes. Additionally, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Ethics Review Board has approved the national survey. This data collection effort is also approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

We will not release the name of your hospital to anyone nor will we release any data that could identify your hospital or your patients. Any data released in a public use file will only include de-identified, aggregate data.

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