

MEPS Receives 2008 Policy Impact Award

The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) announced the 2008 Policy Impact Award in May. MEPS Project Director, Pat Ward attended the award ceremony at AAPOR in New Orleans, Louisiana. The following is an excerpt from *Ascribe, The Policy Interest Newswire*.

The 2008 Policy Impact Award goes to the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) at the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality in recognition of their extraordinary, long-term group effort in contributing timely data and research that has informed U.S. health care policy decisions.

The Medical Expenditure Panel Survey at the AHRQ has collected detailed information about the use and payment for health care services from a nationally representative sample of Americans for two decades. The research program includes healthcare data collection, development, research, and the translation of research into practice, with the goal of identifying strategies to improve access, foster appropriate use, and reduce unnecessary expenditures. Few other surveys provide the foundation for estimating the effect healthcare changes have on different economic groups and special populations, such as the poor, elderly, veterans, uninsured, and racial and ethnic groups.

In the past several years, MEPS data and associated research findings have quickly become a linchpin for the nation's economic models and their projections of healthcare expenditures and utilization. MEPS data have been used in hundreds of scientific publications and many more unpublished reports. MEPS findings have been used by many federal agencies to inform congressional policy decisions, and in the public and private sectors to help develop economic projections.

For example, MEPS research findings have been used extensively by the Congressional Budget Office, Department of Treasury, Joint Taxation Committee and Department of Labor to inform Congressional inquiries related to health care expenditures, insurance coverage and sources of payment, and to analyze potential tax and other implications of Federal Health Insurance Policies. MEPS is also used to develop estimates provided in the Consumers Checkbook Guide to Health Plans, of expected out-of-pocket costs (premiums, deductibles and copays) for federal employees and retirees for their health care.

Key collaborators to the MEPS Program include the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Bureau of the Census, and Westat.

For more information about MEPS, visit www.meps.ahrq.gov.