

# American Psychiatric Association

1000 Wilson Boulevard  
Suite 1825  
Arlington, VA 22209  
Telephone 703.907.7300  
Fax 703.907.1085  
E-mail [apa@psych.org](mailto:apa@psych.org)  
Internet [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org)

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Dear Doctor,

While acknowledging the many competing demands on your busy schedule, I am writing to encourage you to participate in the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS) that you will be receiving in the mail within the next few weeks. As the foundation for a wide array of health services research and policy initiatives, the NAMCS database plays a singularly important role in improving the quality of health care in the United States.

The American Psychiatric Association, along with other medical specialty organizations, has assumed an active role in finalizing the NAMCS forms and procedures. I believe you will find that the survey design minimizes record-keeping on your part and your overall investment of time while it maximizes the utility of the data. Having participated in the survey by virtue of my own part-time clinical practice, I can attest to the user-friendliness of the survey questionnaire and to the efficiency with which the researchers at the National Center for Health Statistics analyze and disseminate the findings.

The usefulness of the NAMCS data does not end with the NCHS reporting. These data have greatly enriched research projects undertaken by APA's American Psychiatric Institute for Research and Education (APIRE). Indeed, throughout all of health care, the survey findings lend themselves to a wealth of applications, including planning and organizing health services, assessing health facility and workforce requirements, determining desirable modifications in medical education programs, and yielding an ever-clearer picture of the nature, history, and epidemiology of disease in ambulatory settings.

You should be aware that the NAMCS is the *only* national survey of patient visits made to private, office-based, non-Federal physicians in the U.S. APA and other physician groups strongly endorse the survey, but the value of our endorsement clearly is contingent on your involvement.

I am confident that you will find the information derived from the survey will be well worth your contribution of time and energy. Thanks in advance for your positive response to this "bottom up" initiative for enhancing the quality of contemporary and future health care in our Nation.

Sincerely yours,



Darrel A. Regier, M.D., M.P.H.  
Director, Division of Research

