Medical Expenditure Panel Survey

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND DATA PRODUCTS

MEPS Website
www.meps.ahrq.gov

- **Overview of MEPS and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**
- **Staff Reports using MEPS**
  - **Findings/Statistical Briefs/Chart books**
- **Data Tables of Estimates**
- **Public Use Files (microdata)**
- **MEPSnet Interactive Query Tool**
- **Survey Methodology Reports**
- **Survey Questionnaires and Other Collection Materials**
- **Data product availability and ordering information**
- **MEPS data workshop information and schedule**
- **Mailing list, List server and e-mail for technical assistance**
- **Data Center Information**

Besides being the primary source of MEPS public use data files, the MEPS Web site contains useful background information on the MEPS, electronic versions of publications, information on the on site data center, copies of survey instruments, and MEPS-net -- an interactive query tool.

The web site also allows users to subscribe to mailing lists lists and e-mail notifications of new data product and publication availability.

Researchers are invited to sign up to participate in the MEPS List-serve. It is a moderated forum designed to facilitate free exchange of ideas and information about MEPS.

The MEPS header contains links to:

•Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

•Contact e-mail address

•Translation of selected materials in Spanish

•A site map for searching the Web site

•A search feature

All of the content of the MEPS Web site can be accessed through the left side navigation bar (in yellow).

Except for print specific materials, this navigation bar is displayed with each page.

To return from any page, use the MEPS Home link or the MEPS logo in the header.

Data User Workshops

- **Information will be posted on Workshops and Events section of web site**

- **For inquiries please e-mail: Workshopinfo@ahrq.hhs.gov**

Periodically, MEPS user workshops are conducted. The Web site contains information on planned workshops and enrollment information.

Workshop slides are posted under the workshop section of the web site.

Micro Data Files

- **Public Use Files (Microdata) – Available for downloading from web site (Household survey only)**
- **Restricted Access Files (Microdata)**
  - **MEPS-HC – Available for Use at AHRQ Data Center**
  - **MEPS-IC – Available for Use at Census Research Data Centers**
    - **For more information go to www.ces.census.gov**

All of the MEPS-HC public use data files are available for downloading from the MEPS web site as ASCII files with SAS/SPSS format statements. Zipped format is available to facilitate quicker downloading. Selected files are available free of charge from the AHRQ clearinghouse.

Currently, the MEPS-HC data release schedule is in a steady state. The Use File is released each May, the Point-in-Time File each July, and the Expenditure File each November.

A complete list of upcoming data releases is included in your workshop binder and is available on the MEPS Web site.

Contact Information

■ **MEPS e-mail address –**
MEPSPD@ahrq.gov

■ **MEPS Information Coordinator:**
  – **(301) 427-1406**

For technical assistance you can send an e-mail to the MEPSPD mailbox on the web site and a staff member will get back to you within 24 hours.

AHRQ Data Center

- **Provides researchers access to non-public use MEPS data (except directly identifiable information)**
- **Located in Rockville, MD**
- **Applications/procedures on MEPS web site**
- **User fee of $150.00 includes up to 2 hours of programming (fee waived for full-time students) Additional programming support available at $80.00/hour.**

An application to access the data center is available on the MEPS website, as well as an outline of the entire application process. Project proposals are submitted to the data center coordinator and are reviewed within one week to determine the projects' feasibility and data availability. IRB review is required.

MEPS Data Available at Census Bureau RDC's

- **Research Data Files will be accessible at the 9 regional Census Bureau RDC's (NY,NC, MI, IL, MD, CA, MA)**

- **AHRQ will approve projects**

- **Will require Census Bureau Special Sworn Status**

- **Census user fees will apply**

AHRQ Data Center Facilities

- **Secure room**
- **Terminal connected to secure LAN**
- **SAS, STATA, GAUSS, Stat Transfer, SUDAAN, Limdep, EQS software available, and others upon request**
- **Limited staff support by people who know:**
  - **the data**
  - **the confidentiality issues**
  - **the software**

The AHRQ Data Center is located in the Eisenberg Building at 540 Gaither Road in Rockville, Maryland. The Data Center is in a secure room with terminals connected to a secure LAN. An abundance of statistical software is available, as well as limited staff support.

ADC Guidelines

- **Researcher may bring data in, but not out**
- **Researcher has access only to data needed for approved project**
- **All tabular data will be reviewed for confidentiality before release from Center**
- **Only approved tables can leave the Center**
- **Center will store data files, foreign merge files, and all outputs needed for replication**

Researchers can bring data into the data center to merge with the MEPS data, but no data files can be removed from the data center. Access is granted only to the data needed for the approved project. All tabular data and tables will be reviewed for confidentiality before release from the data center. All the files related to a project are stored, allowing the researcher to return at a future date to replicate or expand on previous work.

ADC Limited Remote Access

- **Once you have an established data center project, and have worked on site to develop and debug programs, jobs may be submitted to our Data Center Supervisor to run. Out-put will be reviewed for confidentiality and mailed to you.**

Examples of Confidential Data Available for ADC Projects

- **Linked MEPS-HC and Secondary Data**

- **Full geo-coding for 1996, 1997 and 2000-2004. FIPS codes for other years**

- **Fully specified industry/occupation and condition codes**

- **Selected State and MSA identifiers and estimation variables**
  - **30 largest states and 10 largest MSAs**

The MEPS-HC data can be linked to secondary data such, as the Area Resource File. The 1996, 1997 and 2000 to 2004 data files have geo-codes down to the Census block-group level, and FIPS codes are available for other years. Also available are fully specified industry and occupation codes, fully specified condition codes, and state and MSA identifiers and estimation variables for the 30 largest states and 10 largest MSAs.

Data Center Questions

- Contact Data Center Administrator by e-mail at:
  CFACTDC@AHRQ.HHS.GOV