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Overview of the National CAHPS Benchmarking Database

Purpose of the NCBD

The primary purpose of the ***National CAHPS Benchmarking Database*** (NCBD) is to facilitate comparisons of ***Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Survey*** (CAHPS) results among various types of CAHPS survey sponsors, including Medicaid agencies, public and private employers, and individual health plans. These comparisons are intended to provide both purchasers and health plans with benchmarking information useful for evaluating and improving performance as measured by the CAHPS survey. The NCBD also offers an important source of primary data for conducting specialized research that will enable improvements in future survey design and a better understanding of health plan and enrollee characteristics that influence performance.

Administration of the NCBD

The NCBD is sponsored by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) and administered by Westat in partnership with Quality Measurement Advisory Service (QMAS) and The Picker Institute. A formal NCBD Advisory Group, composed of representatives from survey sponsor organizations and other groups with an interest in the NCBD, has been established to provide oversight and direction for the project.

Participation in the NCBD

All sponsors of CAHPS surveys that are administered independently according to CAHPS specifications are invited to participate in the NCBD. Survey sponsors include public and private purchasers (employers, state Medicaid agencies, coalitions) and individual health plans.

NCBD Components

The NCBD is designed to include three major data sets:

- **CAHPS Survey Response Data.** The core of the NCBD is composed of the CAHPS survey data, submitted at the individual respondent level by participating sponsors according to specifications provided by the NCBD project. These data include all information from the CAHPS survey, except for information identifying respondent names, addresses, telephone numbers, and member ID numbers.

- **Survey Administration Data.** Information regarding survey administration will also be included, such as mode of administration, dates of survey completion, response rates, data files corresponding to non-respondents, survey vendor information, etc.

- **Health Plan Descriptive Data.** In addition to the survey data, the database also will include descriptive information about each health plan included in the surveys in order to help users interpret the CAHPS data.

The NCBD will include no data identifying individual respondents. The confidentiality of individual respondent information will be maintained at all times.

NCBD Products and Services

Three major products and services will be available to participants in the NCBD:

- **Standard Reports.** A standard sponsor-specific benchmark report will be provided to each participating sponsor comparing its own survey results to appropriate benchmarks derived from the NCBD.

- **Custom Analysis and Reports.** Customized analyses and reports for participating sponsors will be produced on a fee-for-service basis as time and resources permit.

- **Authorized Access to Data Files.** All sponsors participating in the NCBD will have access to their own data. Access by other NCBD participants to sponsor-specific data files will be provided only upon the explicit authorization of the sponsor whose data files are requested. Aggregate or specialized subsets of the NCBD data files may be provided to qualified researchers at charge, according to guidelines developed and approved by the NCBD Advisory Group.

Funding and Participation Fees

The initial Phase One costs of developing and operating the NCBD (starting in 1998) have been covered by QMAS with grant funds provided by the John A. Hartford Foundation. This foundation grant enabled survey sponsors to participate in Phase One at no cost.

Funding for Phase Two (1999) and Three (2000) of NCBD will be provided by AHCPR. This funding will enable us to waive participation costs in 1999 for the first 100 sponsors, provided that their data are submitted according to NCBD specifications and submission deadlines.

Participating sponsors will receive a standard sponsor-specific benchmark report at no cost. A flat fee of $750 will be assessed to each sponsor submitting data that requires significant reformatting. A separate fee schedule will be developed to cover the costs of custom analyses, technical assistance, and for compiling data files in response to authorized requests.

For Further Information

Further information about the NCBD data submission dates and specifications can be obtained from the NCBD web site located at: ***www.cahps-sun.org/sunsite/NCBD/ncbd-htm***. Access to the NCBD web site can be obtained by registering in the ***CAHPS Survey Users Network (SUN)***. Registration can be completed by contacting the ***SUN Help Line*** at **(800) 492-9261** or by visiting the site and registering through E-mail.

If you have any questions please call Dale Shaller at **(651) 430-0759** or call the ***SUN Help Line*** at **(800) 492-9261**.