

MEPS Annual Methodology Report

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Introduction

This report documents the principal design, training and data collection activities of the Household Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey for survey year 2008. These activities were conducted under Contract 290-02-0005, awarded in July 2002. As modified, the contract covers MEPS Panels 8-13.

This report covers all work associated with Panel 11 Round 5, Panel 12 Rounds 3 and 4, and Panel 13 Rounds 1 and 2, which were in the field during the survey year. It includes a description of preparations for fielding a new panel that are performed in the latter half of the year preceding the fielding.

The report touches only briefly on procedures and operations that remained unchanged from prior years. It focuses primarily on features of the project that were new, changed, or enhanced during 2008, and presents the results of the data collection activities conducted during the year. The tables within the report document 2008 data collection results. A comprehensive set of tables showing data collection results from prior years is included in Appendix A.

The most notable change to the project in survey year 2008 was the implementation of an experiment to test varying respondent incentive payments on the new panel, Panel 13. The experiment was designed in 2007 as a result of an OMB request approving a higher incentive payment, and is being carried out on all five rounds of Panel 13 data collection. This report contains an overview of the experimental design and implementation. Results for the first survey year will be provided in a separate report when Panel 13 Round 3 data collection ends in the summer of 2009.

Survey year 2008 began the transition to a more steady state of operations after the significant challenges faced in 2007 with Panel 12, which included the transition from the DOS-based instrument to the windows-based instrument, and the use of the new sample design in the 2006 NHIS. The sample design presented its own challenges: more PSUs were added, and many had small workloads which were difficult to assign efficiently. In 2008, with the addition of the Panel 13 sample, the workload in the new PSUs increased and efficiencies were gained. Panel 11, the last panel to use the DOS-based instrument and the last using the old NHIS sample design, was retired after the spring rounds of data collection.

Chapter 1 of the report describes the sample preparation activities. Chapters 2 through 5 discuss activities associated with the data collection for 2008 including field staff recruiting, training, materials development, questionnaire updates that took place in the Fall of 2007, data collection procedures and results, and home office processing support. Chapter 6 provides an analysis of utilization and timing measures begun in 2007.

This chapter documents the sample preparation activities associated with the fielding of the 2008 sample, which included households selected for Panel 11 Round 5, Panel 12 Round 3, and Panel 13 Round 1.

1.1 Sample Design and Size

Each year MEPS draws its household sample from among responding households in the previous year's National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). The MEPS sample for 2008 – Panel 13 - was selected from households that participated during the first three quarters of the NHIS in 2007, Panels 1 and 4. Panel 13 is the second panel using the new sample design introduced by the NHIS in 2006 and consisted of 9,939 reporting units, the largest panel since Panel 6. Panel 11, from the earlier NHIS sample design, was also fielded in Spring 2008.

As with the Panel 11 and 12 samples, Panel 13 contained an oversample of Asian, low income, and Black households. Panels 12 and 13 also contained an oversample of Hispanic households.

Table 1-1 shows the starting sample sizes for Panels 1 to 13 and the number of NHIS PSUs from which each panel was drawn.

Table 1-1. Initial MEPS sample size and number of NHIS PSUs, all panels

Panel	Initial sample size (RUs)*	NHIS PSUs
1	10,799	195
2	6,461	195
3	5,410	195
4	7,103	100
5	5,533	100
6	11,026	195
7	8,339	195
8	8,706	195
9	8,939	195
10	8,748	195
11	9,654	195
12	7,467	183
13	9,939	183

*RU: Reporting Unit

Table 1-2 on the following page summarizes the combined workload for the January-June and July-December periods from spring 2001 through fall 2008. (Table A-1 in Appendix A shows the data collection periods and sample sizes for all panels and rounds.)

Across the three panels that were active during the first half of 2008, the combined workload was 22,414 RUs. For the two panels that were active during the second half of the year, the total initial workload was 13,384 RUs.

1.2 Sample Delivery and Processing

The 2008 MEPS sample was received in two deliveries. The first delivery, received September 4, 2007 contained households sampled from the first two quarters, Panels 1 and 4 of the 2007 NHIS. Households selected from the third quarter, Panels 1 and 4 of the 2007 NHIS, were delivered on November 21, 2007.

Table 1-2. Data collection periods and starting RU-level sample sizes, Spring 2001 through Fall 2008

January-June 2001	21,069	July-December 2001	13,777
Panel 4 Round 5	5,547	Panel 5 Round 4	4,426
Panel 5 Round 3	4,496	Panel 6 Round 2	9,351
Panel 6 Round 1	11,026		
January-June 2002	21,915	July-December 2002	15,968
Panel 5 Round 5	4,393	Panel 6 Round 4	8,977
Panel 6 Round 3	9,183	Panel 7 Round 2	6,991
Panel 7 Round 1	8,339		
January-June 2003	24,315	July-December 2003	13,814
Panel 6 Round 5	8,830	Panel 7, Round 4	6,655
Panel 7 Round 3	6,779	Panel 8, Round 2	7,159
Panel 8 Round 1	8,706		
January-June 2004	22,552	July-December 2004	14,068
Panel 7 Round 5	6,578	Panel 8, Round 4	6,878
Panel 8 Round 3	7,035	Panel 9, Round 2	7,190
Panel 9 Round 1	8,939		
January-June 2005	22,548	July-December 2005	13,991
Panel 8 Round 5	6,795	Panel 9, Round 4	6,843
Panel 9 Round 3	7,005	Panel 10, Round 2	7,148
Panel 10 Round 1	8,748		
January-June 2006	23,278	July-December 2006	14,280
Panel 9 Round 5	6,703	Panel 10 Round 4	6,708
Panel 10 Round 3	6,921	Panel 11 Round 2	7,572
Panel 11 Round 1	9,654		
January-June 2007	21,326	July-December 2007	12,906
Panel 10 Round 5	6,596	Panel 11 Round 4	7,005
Panel 11 Round 3	7,263	Panel 12 Round 2	5,901
Panel 12 Round 1	7,467		
January-June 2008	22,414	July-December 2008	13,384
Panel 11 Round 5	6,895	Panel 12 Round 4	5,376
Panel 12 Round 3	5,580	Panel 13 Round 2	8,008
Panel 13 Round 1	9,939		

As in recent years, the September sample delivery was instrumental to the project's plan to launch interviewing for the new panel at the beginning of February. The partial file gave insight into the demographic and geographic distribution of the households in the new panel and guidance on the need for recruiting new interviewers. With two MEPS panels in the new sample design, the increase in the number of households in the new PSUS made for larger workloads and more efficient staffing of interviewers.

As soon as the first sample delivery was received, the NHIS sample file formats were reviewed to identify any new variables or values and to make any necessary changes to the project programs that use the sample file information. With the early delivery, Westat began the standard processing through which the NHIS households are reconfigured to conform to

MEPS reporting unit definitions and prepared the files needed for advance mailouts and interviewer assignments. The delivery also allowed time for checking and updating NHIS addresses to improve the quality of the initial mailouts and to identify households that have moved since the NHIS interview.

In order to understand to what extent different levels of respondent payment might reduce nonresponse in MEPS at Round 1 and in subsequent rounds, an experiment testing 3 levels of respondent payments was designed for implementation in Panel 13 Round 1. As part of the processing of the Panel 13 sample, households were assigned to one of three incentive groups - \$30, \$50, and \$70. All households in an NHIS segment were assigned to the same incentive group to eliminate the risk that neighboring households in the MEPS sample receive different incentive amounts.

The segments were assigned to one of two strata based on expected response propensity. Since MEPS response rates are higher among black and low income households, segments with a majority of black or low income households were assigned to the high response strata and Asian and white, non poor households, where response rates have been the lowest were assigned to the low response strata. The same proportion of low income and black households in the total MEPS sample was applied to each incentive group. Since 35 percent of the households in the MEPS sample are black or low income, 35 percent of the segments in the high response strata were assigned to each incentive group. Similarly, 65 percent of the MEPS sample contains Asian and white, non poor households so 65 percent of the segments in each incentive group were from the low response strata.

An unequal assignment of segments across the three incentive groups was done to improve the statistical power for testing the different levels, with the \$30 incentive group (where the lowest response rates were expected) receiving the largest share of the households.

Each year, the NHIS sample includes a percentage of households classified as ‘partial completes’. Table 1-3 shows the percentage of NHIS interviews classified as “partially complete” in panels 3 through 13. The NHIS partial completes are, as a group, more difficult to complete in MEPS than the full NHIS completes and therefore receive special monitoring. For Panel 13 partial completes made up 25 percent of the MEPS sample, the highest percent so far in MEPS.

Table 1-3. Percentage of NHIS households with partially completed interviews in Panels 3 to 13

Panel	Percentage with partially completed interviews
3	10
4	21
5	24
6	22
7	17
8	20
9	19
10	16
11	23
12	19
13	25

This chapter describes changes to the computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) instrument and supporting field materials made in support of the data collection activities for Spring and Fall 2008 (Panel 11 Round 5, Panel 12 Rounds 3 and 4, and Panel 13 Rounds 1 and 2).

2.1 Questionnaire Changes for Spring and Fall 2008

During 2008, the following revisions were made to the MEPS CAPI instrument:

- **Reenumeration.** In Panel 12 Round 4 and Panel 13 Round 2, question wording was revised to probe for relationships more clearly when someone new joins the household.
- **Priority Conditions.** The supplemental section asked in Panel 12 Round 3 and Panel 11 Round 5 was revised to collect additional information about two conditions (diabetes and asthma). In Panel 12 Round 4 and Panel 13 Round 2, on-screen instructions were added on coding “don't know” or “refused” for type of cancer.
- **Child Preventative Health.** The wording of questions in the supplemental section asked in Panel 13 Round 2 and Panel 12 Round 4 was revised to correspond with changes made to the 2008 SAQ.
- **Charge Payment.** In Panel 11 Round 5, Panel 12 Rounds 3 and 4, and Panel 13 Rounds 1 and 2, the wording of the question text and interviewer instructions was revised to clarify intent and improve respondent comprehension of questions about sources of payment and out-of-pocket payments.
- **Access to Care.** In the supplemental section asked in Panel 13 Round 2 and Panel 12 Round 4, question wording was revised to better identify individual medical providers seen at facilities.
- **Employment.** In Panel 11 Round 5, Panel 12 Rounds 3 and 4, and Panel 13 Rounds 1 and 2, employer addresses were no longer collected.

- **Closing.** In Panel 13 Round 2 and Panel 12 Round 4, “cell phone” was added as a response category when a second contact phone number is collected.

Table 2-1 shows the supplements in the CAPI instrument for the rounds administered in calendar year 2008.

Table 2-1. Supplements to the CAPI core questionnaire (including hard-copy materials) for 2008

Supplement	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
Child Health		X		X	
Priority Conditions			X		X
Preventive Care			X		X
Access to Care		X		X	
Satisfaction with Health Care		X		X	
Income			X		X
Assets					X
Medical Provider Authorization Forms	X	X	X	X	X
Pharmacy Authorization Forms			X		X
Self-Administered Questionnaire		X	Round 2 follow-up only	X	Round 4 follow-up only
Diabetes Care Supplement			X		X
Institutional History Form		X	X	X	X
Priority Condition Enumeration	X	New RU members only	X	New RU members only	X

2.2 Changes to Materials and Procedures for Spring and Fall 2008

Increased awareness of the importance of protecting respondent data in 2008 led to some procedural and material changes to assure the security of data collected. In addition, MEPS is working on a long term goal to eliminate all but essential hard copy which increases the risk of exposure of personally identifiable information (PII).

Because of the respondent incentive experiment introduced in Panel 13, changes to materials and procedures were kept to a minimum to reduce the risk that these changes could influence the outcome of the experiment. Respondent contact materials (brochure, advance letters, etc.)

were not changed materially; nor were the administrative forms used for record keeping revised in any significant way, except to support the documentation of the incentive experiment implementation.

Changes made to MEPS materials and manuals are described below.

Instructional Manuals

- Field Interviewer Manual. The field interviewer manual was updated to cover changes made to the Interviewer Management System (IMS) that is part of the Basic Field Operating System (BFOS) in the windows-based system. For reference purposes, an appendix was added with generic copies of the refusal letters mailed to respondents. Another appendix was added with specific instructions for the Panel 13 incentive experiment.
- Question by Question Specifications. Question by Question specifications were updated to cover revisions to the instrument.

Case Materials

- RU Folder. The RU folder was revised so that one version could be used for all rounds, with different rounds indicated by the folder color.
- Record of Calls. The hard copy Record of Calls printed on the RU Folder was changed from a format for recording each contact attempt to a “Notes” page. Interviewers use this page to record notes that can be referred to when entering contacts in the Electronic Record of Calls in BFOS. This change was made as part of the goal of reducing paperwork and increasing security.
- Advance Contact Record (ACR). Most revisions to the ACR were made to collect information for use in evaluating the incentive experiment. Two questions were added to capture whether respondents received and reviewed the respondent mailings, and one question was added to determine if the RU has moved. A new final disposition code was added: “Unable to contact.” The number of contacts and the name of the ACR respondent were no longer recorded, and a question asking if the respondent would prefer a VHS tape instead of a DVD was dropped.
- Self-Administered Questionnaire (SAQ). Some inconsistencies in the underlining and bolding of certain words compared to SAQs in previous years were corrected

in Spring 2008. In Fall 2008 the SAQ was updated for use in Panel 12 Round 4 and Panel 13 Round 2.

- Diabetes Care Supplement (DCS). A question asking about the A1-C blood test was revised to be more descriptive. A question relating to flu vaccination was revised to include “nasal spray” so that it corresponds to CAPI.
- Health Care Information Record Keeper. This newly designed form distributed to respondents at the end of the interview replaced the Record Keeper Tri-Fold used in past years. The Record Keeper includes space to record events as well as health care providers’ contact information.
- Interview Quick Reference Guide. The Job Aid booklet used in previous years was replaced with a condensed version designed for use during the interview.

Security-Related Revisions

- Laptop Passwords. At the start of each cycle of data collection (Spring and Fall), passwords were changed on all interviewer and supervisor laptops as a safeguard against access to the laptop by an unauthorized user.
- Encryption. Beginning in Fall 2008 PGP full disk encryption was implemented on all laptops to protect data. With this enhancement Westat was also able to provide field supervisors and field managers with high-speed internet access to BFOS.
- Instructions for reporting lost case materials and stolen laptops. As part of our compliance with the security C&A, interviewers are required each year to read procedures for reporting lost or stolen materials and laptops and sign a receipt indicating they read the material. This procedure takes place at training for new interviewers and is mailed to the existing field staff each year, with new confidentiality pledges to sign and return.
- Incident Reporting Plan. Westat developed a plan for reporting the loss of laptops or hard copy materials with personal identifying information in accordance with IRB and government requirements. This included a report log used to track the resolution of all security issues, and a hotline number which was staffed 24/7 to ensure that any incidents were reported promptly. During 2008 an automated notification system was developed and tested, to be implemented in 2009.

3.1 Recruiting for 2008

A new sample design with both new and overlap PSUs was implemented beginning in 2007 with Panel 12. Some of the new PSUs with light workloads were not staffed for Panel 12. Selected travelers worked cases in these locations. In 2008, with the introduction of Panel 13, the sample size in the new PSUs increased sufficiently to hire local interviewers.

Recruiting for 2008 began in Fall 2007 following delivery of the Panel 13 sample. Recruiting needs were established by estimating the full workload for the new panel and adding it to the existing workload in Panels 11 and 12. The projected total caseload in each PSU was used to calculate the number of interviewers needed. This number was compared to the number of active interviewers on staff in each PSU, to determine PSU-level staffing requirements.

A total of 145 interviewers were recruited and 135 completed the training programs. With the addition of these new trainees, the project began 2008 data collection with a total of 484 interviewers. Of these, 35 were experienced interviewers working in PSUs with only Panel 11 Round 5 cases whose work ended after the Spring data collection. There were 97 interviewers (20%) who were lost to attrition during the spring interviewing rounds. An additional 11 (2%) of those remaining were lost during the fall round. Total attrition for the year was 22 percent, excluding the interviewers whose work ended with Panel 11. This rate is comparable to the prior six years, where attrition rates have ranged from 21 to 24 percent.

3.2 2008 Trainings

The interviewer training program for 2008 included the new interviewer in-person training in Anaheim, California, between February 1-14, a home study for experienced interviewers prior to the start of the Round 1/3/5, and a home study for all interviewers prior to the start of Round 2/4. Both the in-person training and home study trainings were modeled on the 2005 materials, with updates to correspond with the new windows-based instrument. An 11-day training session included instruction on the administration of the Round 1 core interview

followed by several days of training on dependent interviewing and the supplemental sections in the Rounds 3 and 5 interviews. For one day of the training, 24 bilingual interviewers were brought together from their separate training rooms to practice administering the instrument in Spanish during role plays. After the general training was completed, they were given an additional day to practice introducing the survey and answering respondent questions in Spanish.

In Fall 2008, all interviewers completed a Round 2/4 home study, and interviewers who attended the February 2008 in-person training were required to participate in a mock interview. The home study featured a review of the supplemental sections, information about new procedures and updates to the instrument, and an exercise to be completed and returned to supervisors. Each interviewer completing the home study was instructed to store the supplemental reading in his/her Interviewer's Procedures Manual for future reference.

To hone interviewers' skills and maintain data quality, the project used several methods of continuing education during 2008. Emails were sent to all field staff on a daily basis to keep them informed of the progress of data collection; these often contained instructions, reminders, and clarifications of procedures and questionnaire items. During 2008, Wednesday production emails to the field sometimes included a "refusal conversion exercise" scenario. Scenarios reflected common respondent cooperation issues as reported by field staff. Interviewers were instructed to reflect on the scenario, and email their supervisor with their ideas on how best to approach the situation presented in the scenario. The best ideas were shared with all interviewers.

A quarterly newsletter provided updates about project news and a more in-depth look at selected procedures. In addition, interviewers could send questions to be answered by home office staff in an "Ask Dr. MEPS" column included in the newsletter.

4.1 Schedule

Table 4-1 shows the calendar dates and number of weeks per round in the standardized, “steady state” data collection schedule for the 5 rounds of MEPS household data collection. The data collection schedule has remained essentially unchanged since 2002. There is a two week interval between the end of rounds 1 and 3 and the start of rounds 2 and 4. Rounds 3 and 5 begin in mid-January of each year followed by a February 1 start-up for round 1. The later start of round 1 allows for a minimum 4 week reference period for the first round of MEPS interviews. The fixed schedule for data collection provides a secure anchor for scheduling the related activities that prepare for or immediately follow the data collection, such as the preparation of field materials for subsequent rounds and identification of the sample for the Medical Provider Component.

Table 4-1. Data collection schedule and number of weeks per round of data collection

Round	Dates	No. of weeks in round
1	February 1 – July 15	23
2	August 1 – December 15	20
3	January 10 – June 15	22
4	July 1 – December 1	21
5	January 15 – May 31	19

4.2 Operations

Incentive Experiment

New for Panel 13 was the implementation of a respondent incentive experiment to test the effect of different levels of payment on response rates, nonresponse bias, data quality, and costs. The experiment will be in place for all five rounds of data collection. In 2008, the experiment was carried out on Rounds 1 and 2 of Panel 13. As mentioned earlier, a full description of the experimental design and results from the first two rounds of data collection will be provided in a separate report.

To enhance comparison of the results from the experiment with prior MEPS panels, procedural changes to operational activities were held to a minimum, except for changes to procedures related to implementation of the experiment. This was done so that differences detected in the research objectives could be attributed to the different incentive amounts. Pre-field activities, including advance letter mail outs, advance contact calls, and assignment material preparation remained unchanged from prior years. Home office tracking, disseminating information from the respondent calls to the Alex Scott line, mailing of refusal letters, and other data collection support activities were also relatively unchanged from prior years.

Implementation of the incentive experiment involved several minor changes to the case materials and reporting forms. So that interviewers knew the incentive amount assigned to a case, all labels on case folders and RU folders contained a code to indicate the amount. In addition, the interviewer's weekly status report, the Interviewer Assignment Sheet, indicated the incentive amount. To reduce the risk of paying the respondent the wrong amount, the check for the appropriate amount was included in each case folder. Interviewers were trained to exercise caution when handing an advance letter to a Panel 13 respondent since the letter indicated the payment amount. Checking respondent payment receipts during home office receipt processing verified that interviewers were careful to follow this procedure. Less than a dozen households were paid the wrong amount across Rounds 1 and 2 of Panel 13.

To avoid any possibility of influencing the outcome of the experiment, home office and field supervisors and managers were blinded to the production and response rate status by incentive group throughout the field period. Although the incentive amount for each case was clearly visible on the materials, combining the outcomes by incentive group for reporting purposes was not done until the end of the data collection round.

Transition to the New NHIS PSUs

The challenges and complications of data collection experienced in 2007 when the Blaise/WVS instrument was first deployed and the new panel (Panel 12) of households was selected from the new NHIS sample design, had less of an impact in 2008 data collection. In the Spring rounds, only one panel, Panel 11, was still in the old sample design and using the DOS-based instrument. Although interviewers working in all three panels still had to carry two laptops during the Spring data collection, the remaining challenges of working in a new

instrument and locating households in new geographic areas were minimized by the experience gained during the prior year. By Fall, the Panel 11 sample was retired and both rounds of fall data collection were in the new sample of PSUs using the Blaise/WVS system, which had a positive impact on the response rates in the Fall data collection. (Response rates are provided in Section 4.3, Data Collection Results.)

One challenge to the 2008 data collection effort was covering the work in 102 MEPS PSUs in the old sample design (Panel 11 Round 5 work.). Interviewers in these PSUs saw their caseload diminish considerably from the levels of earlier years.

Security Incidents

In 2008 the method for reporting incidents of lost/stolen hard copy and laptops was formalized and documented in the plan “Procedures For Reporting Incidents of Loss/Theft of Laptop Computers and Hard Copy with Personal Identifying Information (PII)”. A documentation log describing each incident was maintained and provided to AHRQ whenever an incident occurred or an update was made to the documentation. AHRQ was notified within one hour of the discovery of each loss or suspected loss.

There were 13 separate incidents of lost/stolen hardcopy and laptops reported in 2008. In 6 of the incidents, the lost items were recovered. In the remaining incidents, 13 case folders and one Authorization form were lost and not recovered and two laptops were not recovered, though police reports were filed for each laptop. All respondents at risk of PII exposure were notified of the loss by certified mail. To minimize the risk of exposure, all MEPS laptops were full disk encrypted in August of 2008 using a system of file-based and full disk-encryption software (PGP) that is FIPS 140-2 compliant. The two laptops that were not recovered were full disk encrypted. However, one laptop still posed a security threat since it was a laptop that was not recovered by an interviewer who was released from the study. This interviewer could access the information on the laptop using her assigned password.

Travel to Complete Work

Table 4-2 shows the percent of cases completed on travel status during the Spring data collection rounds in 2006 through 2008. Nearly 18 percent of completes obtained in the Spring 2007 data collection were obtained on travel status. In 2008 the percent completed on travel status rose to nearly 20 percent. The percent of all Panel 13 Round 1 completes

obtained on travel status (23.7 percent) decreased from Panel 12 Round 1 (26.3 percent.) One contributing factor could be the workload distributed among PSUs in the old and new sample designs. With the addition of a second panel in the new design, the work increased in the new PSUs, enough so that there was sufficient work to support a local interviewers. As can be seen from the table, the percent of Round 1 cases completed on travel in Panel 11, Round 1, when the old sample design was in place, was only 20.2 percent. The spike in Panel 12 to 26.3 percent was followed the next year by a return to about 20 percent of Round 1 work completed on travel.

The overall increase in completes done on travel in Spring 2008 could be due to the interviewer attrition from small caseloads experienced in the Panel 11 Round 5 old design PSUs. With more PSUs without local staff the need for travel shifted to Panel 11 (from Panel 12 in 2007.)

Table 4-2. Percent of total interviews conducted on travel

	Data Collection Period	All Completes	Completed On Travel	
			N	Percent
Spring 2006	P11R1, P10R3, P9R5	20,939	3,498	16.7
	P11R1 Only	N	1,528	20.2
		Percent	36.2	43.7
Spring 2007	P12R1, P11R3, P10R5	19,369	3,439	17.8
	P12R1 Only	N	1,552	26.3
		Percent	30.5	45.1
Spring 2008	P13R1, P12R3, P11R5	20,181	3,951	19.6
	P13R1 Only	N	1,903	23.7
		Percent	39.7	48.2

The Medical Provider Component continued to have difficulty securing cooperation from several large pharmacy chains and the procedure for collecting patient profiles from these pharmacies was folded into the Household Component data collection. As in 2007, the

decision to collect the profiles was made before the field period for the Panel 12 Round 4 data collection effort started so the request for profiles could be made at the end of the round 4 interview. There were five pharmacies included in the patient profile collection in 2008.

The same procedures for carrying out the patient profile collection used in 2007 were used in 2008. For Panel 12, Round 4 households, letters with instructions and lists of RU members who used the pharmacies were assembled and included in the case folder for each household with signed authorization forms. Respondents were told that upon receipt of the patient profile(s), they would be paid \$30 for the time and effort made to collect the profile(s).

Panel 11 Round 5 households were mailed a request to collect patient profiles after they had completed their last interview round. These households were also told that they would be sent a check for \$30 for returning patient profiles.

Results of the effort are shown in Table 4-3. The percentage of profiles collected from household respondents in 2008 was comparable to the 2007 patient profile collection. Although more profiles were requested in 2008, the percentage of completed profiles received stayed the same. The effort provided patient profiles that could not have been collected in the MPC through corporate contacts.

Table 4-3. Results of patient profile collection for medications prescribed in 2008

P12R3 and P11R5 In-Person and Mail Collection					
Pharmacy	Total Number	Total Received	Percent Received	Total Complete	Completes as a Percent of Total
Total RUs	2,764	1,116	40.4%	775	28.0%
Total Pairs	4,331	1,643	37.9%	1,118	27.4%

P12R3 In-Person Collection					
Pharmacy	Total Number	Total Received	Percent Received	Total Complete	Completes as a Percent of Total
Total RUs	1,173	717	61.1%	488	41.6%
Total Pairs	1,791	1,091	60.9%	740	41.3%

P11R5 All Mail Collection					
Pharmacy	Total Number	Total Received	Percent Received	Total Complete	Completes as a Percent of Total
Total RUs	1,591	399	25.1%	287	18.0%
Total Pairs	2,540	552	21.7%	448	17.6%

Quality Control

Quality control measures followed on previous panels continued to receive attention during the 2008 data collection effort. Five full-time experienced MEPS field interviewers made validation calls by phone; field supervisors also validated some of the work in their regions – especially the work of new interviewers. Cases without phone numbers or cases that were difficult to reach by phone were either validated in person or by mail. About 20 percent of the sample was pre-selected for validation and at least 15 percent of each interviewer’s case assignment was validated to ensure that the interview took place and appropriate procedures were followed. In addition, supervisors selected at least one interviewer from the region in each data collection cycle (spring and fall) for 100 percent validation. As in prior years, all interviews completed in less than 30 minutes were validated. *The problems found in interviews of less than 30 minutes were comparable in frequency and type to those found in the validation of interviews greater than 30 minutes. For interviews of less than 30 minutes, some respondents told the validator that the interview took from 45 minutes to an hour, but many respondents were not certain about the interview duration. To date, no falsifications have been found in the interviews of less than 30 minutes.* All new interviewers were observed in person at least once during their first year of interviewing. No interviewers were released as a result of an observation, although most received feedback on ways to improve specific interviewing skills.

4.3 Data Collection Results

Table 4-4 provides an overview of the data collection results, showing sample sizes, average interviewer hours per completed interview, and response rates for Panels 9 through 13. (Table A-2 in Appendix A shows the data collection results for all panels.) Response rates achieved in all five rounds of interviewing in 2008 exceeded response rates achieved in 2007. The only

exception was Panel 12 Round 4 which remained within a half of a percentage point of Round 4 response rates in the three prior panels.

The response rates for Panel 13 were noticeably higher than in recent panels. The Round 1 response rate was the highest since Panel 10 – and exceeded the round 1 response rates in Panels 11 and 12 by as much as 1.5 percentage points. The Panel 13 Round 2 response rate was 2.4 percentage points higher than in Panel 12, and 1.7 percent higher than Panel 11. It was the highest round 2 response rate since Panel 9 in 2004.

With two panels in the new sample design, the total caseloads increased in the new PSUs. The increase in work allowed for a more efficient assignment of cases in the PSUs, as reflected in a decrease in hours per complete. Panel 13 Round 1 hours per complete decreased by two hours from Panel 12 Round 1 (12.2 vs. 14.2). Panel 12 Round 3 hours per complete decreased by one hour from Panel 12 Round 2. Panel 12 Round 3 had the benefit of having a second panel (Panel 13) in the new design to increase workload. During its first year in the field (Rounds 1 and 2), Panel 12 was the only panel in the new PSUs and experienced some inefficiencies because of the small workload.

Table 4-5 shows response rates and the components of nonresponse for Round 1 of the five most recent MEPS panels. The refusal rate for Panel 13 was the lowest it has been since before Panel 9 in 2004. It dropped by 2 percent over the rates for refusal in Panels 11 and 12. This may be a result of the increased incentive amount for nearly two thirds of the Panel 13 households.

Table 4-6 shows the components of nonresponse for Rounds 2 and 4. Panel 13, again, showed the most marked improvement on response rate and lowest rate of refusals. The refusal rate for Panel 13 Round 2 was nearly 2 ½ percent lower than the refusal rate in Panel 12 Round 2. Again, the increase in incentive amount may have had the largest impact on the reduction in refusals.

Medical provider authorization form signing rates are shown in Table 4-7 for Panels 9 through 13. (Table A-3 in Appendix A shows the signing rates for all panels and rounds to date.) With the exception of Panel 12, the MPC signing rates increased in Panel 11 and Panel 13. The largest was a 9.4 percent increase between Panel 13 Round 1 and Panel 12 Round 1.

Table 4-8 shows signing rates for pharmacy authorization forms for Panels 9 through 12 (Table A-4 in Appendix A shows the signing rates for all panels and rounds to date.) In 2008, the signing rates for these forms for both Panel 11 Round 5 and Panel 12 round 3 were higher than the previous year's rates.

Table 4-4. MEPS HC data collection results, Panels 9 through 13

Panel/round		Original sample	Split cases (movers)	Student cases	Out-of-scope cases	Net sample	Completes	Average interviewer hours/complete	Response rate (%)	Response rate goal
Panel 9	Round 1	8,939	417	73	179	9,250	7,205	10.5	77.9	84.0
	Round 2	7,190	237	40	40	7,427	7,027	7.7	94.6	95.0
	Round 3	7,005	189	24	31	7,187	6,861	7.1	95.5	97.5
	Round 4	6,843	142	23	44	6,964	6,716	7.4	96.5	97.0
	Round 5	6,703	60	8	43	6,728	6,627	6.1	98.5	97.0
Panel 10	Round 1	8,748	430	77	169	9,086	7,175	11.0	79.0	84.0
	Round 2	7,148	219	36	22	7,381	6,940	7.8	94.0	95.0
	Round 3	6,921	156	10	31	7,056	6,727	6.8	95.3	98.0
	Round 4	6,708	155	13	34	6,842	6,590	7.3	96.3	97.0
	Round 5	6,596	55	9	38	6,622	6,461	6.2	97.6	97.0
Panel 11	Round 1	9,654	399	81	162	9,972	7,585	11.5	76.1	84.0
	Round 2	7,572	244	42	24	7,834	7,276	7.8	92.9	95.0
	Round 3	7,263	170	15	25	7,423	7,007	6.9	94.4	98.0
	Round 4	7,005	139	14	36	7,122	6,898	7.2	96.9	97.0
	Round 5	6,895	51	7	44	6,905	6,781	5.5	98.2	97.0
Panel 12	Round 1	7,467	331	86	172	7,712	5,901	14.2	76.5	84.0
	Round 2	5,901	157	27	27	6,058	5,584	9.1	92.2	95.0
	Round 3	5,580	105	13	12	5,686	5,383	8.1	94.7	98.0
	Round 4	5,376	102	12	16	5,474	5,267	8.8	96.2	97.0
Panel 13	Round 1	9,939	502	97	213	10,325	8,017	12.2	77.6	84.0
	Round 2	8,008	220	47	23	8,252	7,809	9.0	94.6	95.0

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Table 4-5. Summary of nonresponse for Round 1, 2004-2008

	2004 P9 R1	2005 P10 R1	2006 P11 R1	2007 P12R1	2008 P13R1
Net sample of RUs (N)	9,250	9,086	9,972	7,712	10,325
Response rate (%)	77.9	79.0	76.1	76.5	77.6
Refusal rate (%)	17.5	16.6	18.4	18.4	16.4
Unlocated rate (%)	3.0	3.3	3.8	3.9	4.3
All remaining nonresponse (%)	1.6	1.1	1.7	1.2	1.7

NOTE: Figures in tables showing results of field work are drawn from the database used to monitor ongoing production and from the 'delivery' database, which reflects minor adjustments made in post-data collection processing. This is the source of several discrepancies in totals shown in the tables.

Table 4-6. Summary of nonresponse for Rounds 2 and 4, 2005-2008

	2005 P9R4	2006 P10R4	2007 P11R4	2008 P12R4	2005 P10R2	2006 P11R2	2007 P12R2	2008 P13R2
Net sample of RUs (N)	6,964	6,842	7,122	5,472	7,381	7,834	6,058	8,253
Response rate (%)	96.5	96.3	96.8	96.2	94.0	92.9	92.2	94.6
Refusal rate (%)	2.2	2.5	2.0	2.7	4.5	5.3	6.2	3.8
Unlocated rate (%)	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.0
All remaining nonresponse (%)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6

Table 4-7. Signing rates for medical provider authorization forms for Panels 9 through 13

Panel/round		Authorization forms requested	Authorization forms signed	Signing rate (%)
Panel 9	Round 1	2,253	1,681	74.6
	Round 2	22,668	17,522	77.3
	Round 3	19,601	13,672	69.8
	Round 4	20,147	14,527	72.1
	Round 5	15,963	10,720	67.2
Panel 10	Round 1	2,068	1,443	69.8
	Round 2	22,582	17,090	75.7
	Round 3	18,967	13,396	70.6
	Round 4	19,087	13,296	69.7
	Round 5	15,787	10,476	66.4
Panel 11	Round 1	2,154	1,498	69.5
	Round 2	23,957	17,742	74.1
	Round 3	20,756	13,400	64.6
	Round 4	21,260	14,808	69.7
	Round 5	16,793	11,482	68.4
Panel 12	Round 1	1,695	1,066	62.9
	Round 2	17,787	12,524	70.4
	Round 3	15,291	10,006	65.4
	Round 4	15,692	10,717	68.3
Panel 13	Round 1	2,217	1,603	72.3
	Round 2	24,357	18,566	76.2

Table 4-8. Signing rates for pharmacy authorization forms for Panels 9 through 12

Panel/round		Authorization forms requested	Authorization forms signed	Signing rate (%)
Panel 9	Round 3	14,334	11,189	78.1
	Round 5	13,416	10,893	81.2
Panel 10	Round 3	13,928	10,706	76.9
	Round 5	12,869	10,260	79.7
Panel 11	Round 3	14,937	11,328	75.8
	Round 5	13,778	11,332	82.3
Panel 12	Round 3	10,840	8,242	76.0

Table 4-9 shows the results of the Self-Administered Questionnaire (SAQ) data collection. SAQ collection begins in rounds 2 and 4 of a panel, with followup for nonresponse in Rounds 3 and 5. Table 4-9 shows both the round-specific response rate and the combined rate after the followup round was completed. (Table A-5 in Appendix A shows the results of the SAQ collection for all applicable panels and rounds to date.) The combined rates for the first year of Panel 13 and second year of Panel 12 showed slight increases in response rates from their counterparts in the prior year. The SAQ response rate for Panel 13 Round 2 was the highest it has been since before Panel 9.

Table 4-9. Results of self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) collection for Panels 9 through 13

Panel/round		SAQs requested	SAQs completed	SAQs refused	Other nonresponse	Response rate (%)
Panel 9	Round 2	12,541	10,631	381	1,529	84.8
	Round 3	1,670	886	287	496	53.1
	Combined, 2004	12,541	11,517	668	2,025	91.9
	Round 4	11,913	10,357	379	1,177	86.9
	Round 5	1,478	751	324	403	50.8
	Combined, 2005	11,913	11,108	703	1,580	93.2
Panel 10	Round 2	12,360	10,503	391	1,466	85.0
	Round 3	1,626	787	280	559	48.4
	Combined, 2005	12,360	11,290	671	2025	91.3
	Round 4	11,726	10,081	415	1,230	86.0
	Round 5	1,516	696	417	403	45.9
	Combined, 2006	11,726	10,777	832	1,633	91.9
Panel 11	Round 2	13,146	10,924	452	1,770	83.1
	Round 3	1,908	948	349	611	49.7
	Combined, 2006	13,146	11,872	801	2,381	90.3
	Round 4	12,479	10,771	622	1086	86.3
	Round 5	1,621	790	539	292	48.7
	Combined, 2007	12,479	11,561			92.6
Panel 12	Round 2	10,061	8,419	502	1,140	83.7
	Round 3	1,460	711	402	347	48.7
	Combined, 2007	10,061	9,130			90.7
	Round 4	9,550	8,303	577	670	86.9
Panel 13	Round 2	14,410	12,541	707	1,162	87.0

The response rates for the Diabetes Care Supplement (DCS) are shown in Table 4-10. (Table A-6 in Appendix A shows the results of Diabetes Care supplement (DCS) collection for all applicable panels and rounds to date.) Since the DCS is collected only during Rounds 3 and 5, with no followup in the subsequent round, efforts to gain a high response rate are limited to the one round in which the DCS is requested. The DCS rates in the table include the results of an additional followup effort conducted

by telephone toward the end of the field period. The response rate for the DCS in Panel 12 Round 3 reached 90 percent for the first time since Panel 9 Round 3.

Table 4-10. Results of diabetes care supplement (DCS) collection for Panels 9 through 12

Panel/round		DCSs requested	DCSs completed	Response rate (%)
Panel 9	Round 3	1,003	909	90.6
	Round 5	904	806	89.2
Panel 10	Round 3	1,060	939	88.6
	Round 5	1,078	965	89.5
Panel 11	Round 3	1,188	1,030	86.7
	Round 5	1,182	1,053	89.1
Panel 12	Round 3	917	825	90.0

Table 4-11 summarizes the Round 1 data collection results for the panels begun in calendar years 2004 through 2008. While the round 1 response rate in 2008 is higher than it has been since 2005, the most interesting result is the 2 percent decrease in the refusal rate in the same time period. The contribution of the increased incentive amount being tested in the Panel 13 (2008) data collection could likely explain this difference. On the other hand, the not located rate for this same Panel was higher than in past years, but in keeping with a steady increase in this rate over time.

Table 4-11. Summary of MEPS Round 1 response, 2004-2008 panels

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total sample (N)	9,429	9,240	10,139	7,883	10,538
Out of scope (%)	1.9	1.8	1.5	2.1	2.0
Complete (%)	77.9	79.0	76.1	76.6	77.6
Nonresponse (%)	22.1	21.0	23.9	23.4	22.4
Refusal (%)	17.5	16.6	18.4	18.4	16.4
Not located (%)	3.0	3.3	3.8	3.9	4.3
Other nonresponse (%)	1.6	1.1	1.7	1.2	1.7

Table 4-12 shows the Round 1 results by NHIS completion status (this table includes only the originally sampled NHIS households and excludes sample units added during

data collection as a result of ‘split’ households or the identification of student reporting units). The proportion of partial completes in the Panel 13 sample was the highest it has ever been at 25 percent. Despite the increase in these more difficult cases, the response rate improved, both for NHIS completes and partial completes. This appears to be due to the incentive experiment. Response rates achieved in the \$50 and \$70 incentive groups were higher than the \$30 group, and were high enough to increase the overall Panel 13 Round 1 response rate.

Table 4-12. Summary of MEPS Round 1 response, 2004-2008 panels, by NHIS completion status

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Original NHIS sample (N)	8,939	8,748	9,654	7,467	9,939
Percent complete in NHIS	81.4	84.0	77.0	80.6	75.2
Percent partial complete in NHIS	18.6	16.0	23.0	19.4	24.8
MEPS Round 1 response rate					
Percent complete for NHIS completes	81.0	81.2	80.1	79.8	81.2
Percent complete for NHIS partial completes	64.4	69.6	64.4	63.3	67.0

NOTE: Includes only households in sample originally provided from NHIS.

Table 4-13 presents the completion percentages for the NHIS completes and partial completes by race/ethnicity for the 2005-2008 panels. The table shows substantial changes over time in the proportion of households in each race/ethnicity group. For 2008, the largest change was in the White/other group, which decreased as a proportion of the sample by 12 percent from the prior 2 years. This group has historically had the lowest response rates and having a smaller proportion of these low responders may also be a contributing factor to the increase in the round 1 response rate in Panel 13. The other groups with a change in proportion are Black and Hispanic, with a 5 percent increase in their representation. As in prior years, the response rates for the Asian and White/other groups were lower than for the Black and Hispanic groups.

Table 4-13. Summary of MEPS Round 1 response rates, 2005-2008 panels, by race/ethnicity and NHIS completion status

	2005		2006		2007		2008	
	Percent of net sample	Percent complete	Percent of net sample	Percent complete	Percent of net sample	Percent complete	Percent of net sample	Percent complete
Asian total	4.6	71.1	4.6	71.1	6.2	71.4	7.7	72.6
NHIS complete	3.8	75.3	3.1	75.7	4.8	74.3	5.0	75.9
NHIS partial	0.8	50.7	1.6	62.3	1.4	61.5	2.6	66.3
Black total	17.8	82.5	15.9	80.8	16.4	81.5	21.1	82.7
NHIS complete	14.7	83.8	12.3	83.9	13.2	83.7	15.6	86.4
NHIS partial	3.0	76.1	3.6	70.2	3.1	72.0	5.5	72.0
Hispanic total	19.2	82.5	19.4	80.4	17.4	78.7	23.5	78.7
NHIS complete	17.3	82.9	13.9	83.0	13.1	81.7	16.6	81.6
NHIS partial	4.0	81.1	5.5	74.1	4.3	69.7	6.9	71.7
White/other total	58.4	77.4	60.0	73.6	60.0	75.1	47.7	75.7
NHIS complete	49.8	79.6	47.5	77.8	49.3	78.6	37.5	79.3
NHIS partial	8.6	64.5	12.6	57.8	10.7	59.2	10.2	62.5
All groups		79.0		76.1		76.6		77.6
NHIS complete	83.6	80.8	76.7	79.6	80.4	79.7	74.8	81.1
NHIS partial	16.4	70.0	23.3	63.9	19.6	63.7	25.2	67.5

NOTE: Includes reporting units added to sample as "splits" and "students" from original NHIS households, which were given the same 'complete' or 'partial complete' designation as the original NHIS household.

Table 4-14 presents the same breakouts as Table 4-13, but highlights refusals, which comprise most of the nonresponse. Nearly a third of the partial completes in the White, other group (30 percent) refused to complete the MEPS interview, contributing to the lower response rate from this group. However, this rate has declined and is the lowest refusal rate from this group since 2003. As with the overall Panel 13 round 1 response rate, the incentive experiment had an impact on the refusal rates, most notably in the white/other race category, which has been seen in early, unweighted response rates by incentive groups.

Table 4-14. Summary of MEPS refusal rates, 2003-2008 panels, by race/ethnicity and NHIS completion status

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Asian						
NHIS complete	18.6	22.1	20.1	19.3	18.1	18.7
NHIS partial	28.5	30.4	42.3	31.4	24.8	24.9
Black						
NHIS complete	9.4	11.2	9.9	10.9	10.8	8.2
NHIS partial	14.1	19.3	17.0	22.9	20.2	18.4
Hispanic						
NHIS complete	8.5	8.8	9.3	8.4	10.2	10.6
NHIS partial	12.1	14.9	12.3	15.6	17.4	14.6
White, not Hispanic						
NHIS complete	16.0	18.3	17.9	18.2	18.6	17.4
NHIS partial	28.0	32.4	31.3	35.9	36.0	30.4
All groups	15.4	17.5	16.6	18.4	18.4	16.3
NHIS complete	13.8	15.5	15.0	15.3	15.9	14.1
NHIS partial	22.4	26.4	24.5	28.7	28.5	22.9

Table 4-15 presents response information for a combination of race/ethnicity and sample domain categories. In general, the response patterns for 2008 are similar to those of prior years. Each of the low-income groups had a higher response rate than the associated non-low-income group. The Asian and the White/other, non-low-income groups had the lowest response rates and highest refusal rates. As in past years, the highest rate for not-located households was among the Hispanic, low-income group.

Table 4-15. Summary of MEPS Panel 13 Round 1 response rates, by sample domain by NHIS completion status

	Net sample (N)	Complete (%)	Refusal (%)	Not located (%)	Other nonresponse (%)
By race/ethnicity and domain					
Asian	913	72.6	20.6	4.1	2.7
NHIS complete	519	75.9	18.7	3.1	2.3
NHIS partial complete	273	66.3	24.9	5.1	3.7
Black, low income	580	87.6	7.2	4.1	1.0
NHIS complete	473	89.2	5.5	4.2	1.1
NHIS partial complete	107	80.4	15.0	3.7	0.9
Black, not low income	1,592	81.0	12.2	5.0	1.9
NHIS complete	1,136	85.3	9.3	3.7	1.7
NHIS partial complete	456	70.2	19.3	8.1	2.4
Hispanic, low income	693	81.1	7.1	9.8	2.0
NHIS complete	514	84.2	5.8	8.4	1.6
NHIS partial complete	179	72.1	10.6	14.0	3.4
Hispanic, not low income	1,727	77.8	13.6	6.6	2.0
NHIS complete	1,198	80.6	12.5	5.2	1.7
NHIS partial complete	529	71.5	16.1	9.8	2.6
White/other, low income	620	83.4	11.3	3.9	1.5
NHIS complete	520	87.1	8.5	3.3	1.2
NHIS partial complete	100	64.0	26.0	7.0	3.0
White/other, not low income	4,200	74.6	21.6	2.4	1.4
NHIS complete	3,268	78.1	18.9	1.9	1.1
NHIS partial complete	932	62.4	30.8	4.3	2.5
All groups	10,325	77.6	16.3	4.3	1.7
NHIS complete	7,719	81.1	14.1	3.5	1.4
NHIS partial complete	2,606	67.5	22.9	6.9	2.7

NOTE: Includes reporting units added to sample as "splits" and "students" from original NHIS households, which were given the same 'complete' or 'partial complete' designation as the original household.

Table 4-16 summarizes the results of refusal conversion efforts by panel. Conversion rates have varied from a low of 23 percent to a high of 28 percent, though the final refusal rates have stayed within 2 percent across panels.

Table 4-16. Summary of MEPS round 1 results: ever refused, final refusals, and refusal conversion rate, by panel

Panel	Net Sample (N)	Ever Refused (%)	Converted (%)	Final Refusal Rate (%)	Final Response Rate (%)
Panel 9	9,429	21.9	23.0	17.5	77.9
Panel 10	9,240	21.6	26.8	16.6	79.0
Panel 11	10,139	23.8	24.2	18.4	76.0
Panel 12	7,721	25.4	28.2	18.4	76.6
Panel 13	10,325	22.3	23.7	16.3	77.6

Table 4-17 shows results of locating efforts for households that required tracking during the Round 1 field period by panel. The 15.6 percent of the sample that required tracking in Panel 13 was about 1 percent lower than in Panel 12 though higher than the other earlier panels. The percent not located was the highest it has been at 4.2 percent yet with no obvious reason for the increase.

Table 4-17. Summary of MEPS round 1 results: ever traced and final not located, by panel

Panel	Total sample (N)	Ever traced (%)	Not located (%)
Panel 9	9,429	14.0	3.0
Panel 10	9,240	14.4	3.3
Panel 11	10,139	15.0	3.8
Panel 12	7,883	16.5	3.8
Panel 13	10,538	15.6	4.2

Home Office Processing and Support

5

The variety of home office support activities carried out in prior years continued through 2008. The home office responds to the toll-free respondent information line and relays information from respondent calls to the field. Table 5-1 shows the number and types of calls received during 2007 and 2008. (Table A-8 in Appendix A shows the number and types of calls from 2000 through 2008.)

Table 5-1. Calls to the respondent information line, 2007 and 2008

Reason for call	Spring 2007 (Panel 12 Round 1, Panel 11 Round 3, Panel 10 Round 5)				Fall 2007 (Panel 12 Round 2, Panel 11 Round 4)	
	Round 1		Rounds 3 and 5		Rounds 2 and 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address/telephone change	8	2.1	21	7.3	23	7.6
Appointment	56	14.6	129	44.8	129	42.6
Request callback	72	18.8	75	26.0	88	29.0
No message	56	14.6	37	12.8	33	10.9
Other	20	5.2	15	5.2	6	2.0
Proxy needed	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Request SAQ help	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Special needs	5	1.3	0	0.0	1	0.3
Refusal	160	41.8	10	3.5	21	6.9
Willing to participate	6	1.6	1	0.3	2	0.7
Total	383		288		303	

Table 5-1. Calls to the respondent information line, 2007 and 2008 (continued)

Reason for call	Spring 2008 (Panel 13 Round 1, Panel 12 Round 3, Panel 11 Round 5)				Fall 2008 (Panel 13 Round 2, Panel 12 Round 4)	
	Round 1		Rounds 3 and 5		Rounds 2 and 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address/telephone change	20	3.4	12	4.7	21	5.7
Appointment	92	15.5	117	45.9	148	39.9
Request callback	164	27.6	81	31.8	154	41.5
No message	82	13.8	20	7.8	22	5.9
Other	13	2.2	12	4.7	8	2.2
Proxy needed	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Request SAQ help	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Special needs	4	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Refusal	196	32.9	13	5.1	18	4.9
Willing to participate	24	4.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	595		255		371	

The most significant differences in the calls between 2007 and 2008 are the differences in the percentage calling to refuse. Panel 13 Round 1 experienced a 9 percent decrease in the number of calls to refuse. Even in the Fall of 2008, with Panel 12 Round 4 and Panel 13 Round 2 active, just 4.9 percent called to refuse, compared to 6.9 percent in the Fall 2007 data collection round. Panel 13, overall, has been a more cooperative sample – higher response rate and lower refusal rate – and this is reflected in the kinds of calls received at the respondent hotline.

Home office staff monitor production and provide reports and feedback (such as CAPI interviews conducted in less than 30 minutes) to field managers and supervisors for review and followup. The home office prints validation abstracts, which contain information from the interview, and sends them to the quality control assistants for validation calls. Home office staff also print and distribute split processing reports that provide information for conducting interviews with a split RU. Refusal letter requests and requests for locating information from an outside tracking service also are managed at the home office.

For security reasons, all packages sent to and from the field with personally identifying information (PII) must be shipped via Federal Express. Federal Express has an on line tracking system that can be accessed to trace a package not delivered. Anytime a package containing PII is shipped, the sender must notify the intended

recipient and provide the tracking number of the package, and the date and time of expected delivery. The recipient, in turn, notifies the sender when the package has arrived. This procedure allows staff to quickly identify and promptly report lost case materials.

Contents of completed case folders sent to the home office from the field are reviewed and recorded in the receipt system. Panel 13 cases are carefully reviewed for notes from the interviewer that may indicate that the wrong incentive amount was paid. Such cases are flagged in the receipt system so they can be excluded from the incentive experiment analysis.

Authorization forms are edited for completeness and scanned into an image database. Problems with authorization forms are documented and feedback is sent to the field supervisor to review with the interviewer. The receipt department also tracks interview dates and notifies the field if the case materials for a completed interview have not arrived within 2 weeks of the interview date. SAQs and DCS questionnaires also are receipted and prepared for coding. Supply requests from the field are emailed to the MEPS supply center at the home office and requests are filled promptly. An inventory of supplies is maintained in a database so that shortages are identified early for additional printing.

The MEPS CAPI Hotline continued to provide technical support for field interviewing activities during 2008. Hotline staff are available 7 days a week to help field staff resolve CAPI, Field Management System, transmission, laptop, and modem problems. The CAPI Hotline serves as a focal point for tracking and shipping all field laptops, maintaining systems for monitoring field laptop assignment, and coordinating laptop repair.

Interview Timing and Utilization Measures

With the introduction of the new CAPI system in 2007, substantial attention was focused on identifying potential differences in the data that might be attributable to the new application. Attention focused particularly on the length of the Panel 12 interviews, which in the early weeks of interviewing were taking longer to administer than in prior panels, and on the utilization data, which, in the unweighted measures available during the data collection period, were consistently lower than those observed in the first rounds of prior panels. Special reports developed to monitor progress during the first rounds of Panel 12 were continued through 2008 and extended to the new 2008 panel, Panel 13. A major effort was made to accelerate the development of weights that could be applied to the first full year of data for the new application. These weights and a series of analysis files with data from Panel 12 and, for comparison, Panel 11, were delivered to AHRQ in the months following the close out of the first full year of data collection for Panel 12. As this report was prepared, an AHRQ review of the full-year data for Panel 12 was in progress. This section of the methodology report presents selected findings from the ongoing analyses of interview length and utilization for Panel 12 and Panel 13. These findings are based on operational reports and unweighted data.

Interview Timing

Interviews conducted in Round 1 of Panel 11 had an average interview administration time of 73 minutes. In the early weeks of Panel 12, the average Round 1 administration time was almost 100 minutes, raising concern about the possible effects on participation and data quality of the increase in interview length. New reports, tracking administration time for entire interviews and for each section of the interview were developed to monitor this aspect of the operation. Table 6-1 shows the mean interview times for the rounds of Panels 12 and 13 completed through December 2008, and, for comparison, mean times for interviews completed in Panels 1, 10, 11 with the previous application.

Table 6-1. Timing comparison, Panels 12 and 13 vs. prior panels (mean minutes per interview, single-session interviews)

	Panel 1	Panel 10	Panel 11	Panel 12	Panel 13
Round 1	101.0	73.1	73.1	89.5	84.0
Round 2	95.0	81.5	81.7	91.4	87.8
Round 3	84.3	84.4	85.4	92.4	
Round 4	70.3	76.6	78.0	84.3	

As shown in the table, each round of the new Panel 12 application has taken longer to administer than the comparable rounds of the recent prior panels. The difference was 16.4 minutes in Round 1, 9.7 minutes in Round 2, 7.0 minutes in Round 3, and 6.3 minutes in Round 4. This pattern of declining differences continued with Panel 13, with the two completed rounds of Panel 13 requiring less administration time than the comparable rounds in Panel 12. The residual difference from the earlier application suggests that, beyond the relatively minor content differences in the applications, some aspects of the newer application do add to administration time. The decline over time, however, suggests that learning is a significant component of the difference, and that as interviewers become increasingly experienced with the new application, their administration times decline.

Tracking of the increased interview times in the early rounds of Panel 12 spurred investigation of several possible factors that might account for the increase. Because the content of the instrument had not changed substantially (an exception being the redesign of the priority conditions section), the search focused on factors such as the performance of the interviewers and the new application itself. Results of that investigation were reported separately (Report on Panel 12 Blaise/WVS Interview Administration Time, Dec. 21, 2007). The current report extends one thread of the earlier analysis of the factor of interviewer experience. Table 6-2 shows the mean interview time for Panel 12 and Panel 13 Round 1 interviews, within two experience-related classifications of the Round 1 interviewers. The first classification identifies interviewers on the basis of their prior MEPS interviewing experience – those who were newly trained and were working on MEPS for the first time, and those who had worked on prior panels. Special circumstances in Panel 12 required two different protocols for the new interviewer training (the majority of the new interviewers had

to learn to interview both in the old and the new applications); these circumstances did not apply in Panel 13, and for comparison purposes the two groups of new interviewers in Panel 12 have been collapsed into a single group. For Panel 13, the experienced interviewers included those who had been trained for the first time for Panel 12 and were continuing with the study, and those who had been MEPS veterans at the start of Panel 12 and now had a full year of experience working with the new application.

Table 6-2. Mean round 1 interview time, in minutes, for single-session interviews, Panel 12 and Panel 13, by interview training and production groups

Interviewer Group	Groups by Number of Completes	Panel 12		Panel 13	
		N	Mean Interviewing Time (min)	N	Mean Interviewing Time (min)
New	1-9	277	109.5	219	106.8
	10 or more	949	96.4	1,452	100.3
	Subtotal	1,226	99.4	1,671	101.2
Experienced	1-9	621	87.1	398	87.8
	10 or more	3,170	86.8	5,095	78.2
	Subtotal	3,791	86.8	5,493	78.9

The second level of breakout in the table divides the training groups according to the number of interviews completed: interviewers who completed relatively few (1-9) interviews and those who completed 10 or more. Note that the table includes only interviews completed in a single session. In both panels, a substantial number of interviews (10-13 percent) required more than one session to complete. Multiple session interviews occurred for a variety of reasons – respondent-initiated interruptions, interviewer errors with the new application, and interruptions resulting from features of the application itself. The table is limited to the single-session interviews because accurate timings were not obtained for many of the multi-session interviews.

For both panels, the table shows noticeable differences between the new and experienced interviewers and, within the experience groups, between those in the larger and smaller production categories. Somewhat surprisingly, the mean interview timings were *less* for the new interviewers in Panel 12 than Panel 13, with, for

example, the times for the higher production group of new interviewers about 4 minutes less than for Panel 13 (96.4 vs. 100.3 minutes). Among the groups of experienced interviewers, the mean time for the lower producing group was practically identical in the two panels: 87.1 minutes in Panel 12 and 87.8 minutes in Panel 13. For the higher producing group, however, the mean for Panel 13 was more than 8 minutes less than in Panel 12 (86.8 v 78.2 minutes). Where in Panel 12, the new application was ‘new’ to all interviewers, including those with prior MEPS experience, in Panel 13 the experienced interviewers had worked with the new application for a full year. That additional experience with the Windows application may have been the major factor in the decreased interview times from Panel 12 to Panel 13.

Table 6-3 shows mean times for the Round 1 single-session cases in Panel 12 and Panel 13 broken by NHIS completion outcome. As noted earlier, approximately 19 percent of the Panel 12 sample were classified as “partial complete” in the NHIS interview, and the response rate for these households was 16.5 percent lower than that for the NHIS interviews classified as “complete”. For Panel 13, NHIS partial completes made up 25 percent of the sample and ended with a response rate 14 percent below that of the NHIS completes. The minimal differences between the two groups in the table suggest that, despite the difference in response rate, the interviews that were successfully conducted with the partial complete households were similar to those conducted with the ‘full’ completes.

Table 6-3. Round 1 mean interview time, by NHIS completion status, Panel 12 and 13

NHIS Status	Panel 12		Panel 13	
	N	Min per Intv	N	Min per Intv
Partial Complete	795	89.6	1,530	83.6
Complete	4,222	89.9	5,634	84.2

The longer interview times for the Panel 12, Round 1 interviews, coupled with difficulties experienced in achieving the desired response rate, raised concern for response rates in Round 2 and subsequent rounds. This concern increased as the response rate in the early weeks of Round 2 data collection remained consistently lower than in prior panels. Tables 6-4 through 6-6 were generated to examine the possible impact of several factors on the Round 2 response rate: the length of the Round 1 interview, whether any interruptions or breaks had occurred during the

Round 1 interview, and whether any refusal had occurred during Round 1. The tables show figures both for Panel 12 and Panel 13.

Table 6-4 shows, for the major outcome categories of Round 2, the mean interview time for the Round 1 interviews completed in a single session. In Panel 12, the mean Round 1 interview time for the cases that did *not* respond in Round 2 was about 4 minutes longer (94.1 vs. 90.5 minutes) than for those that *did* respond. In Panel 13, the difference was less, at 2 minutes (84.8 minutes Round 1 administration time for the Round 2 completes, and 86.9 minutes for those that were nonresponse in Round 2).

Table 6-4. Round 2 outcome, by Round 1 interview time (Round 1 interviews with no breaks), Panel 12 and Panel 13

	Panel 12		Panel 13	
	Number	Minutes per RU	Number	Minutes per RU
Total	5,165	90.6	7,390	84.5
Complete	4,771	90.5	6,966	84.5
Out of Scope	14	58.4	18	59.8
Nonresponse	380	94.1	376	86.9

Table 6-5 shows the Round 2 outcome categories by the break status of the Round 1 interview, that is, whether the Round 1 interview was completed in a single session or in multiple sessions. The table shows minimal differences in Round 2 response rate relative to the break status in Round 1: the response rate for the Panel 12 group with legal breaks was 2.6 percent less than that for the group with no breaks, and the same 2.6 percent difference occurred with Panel 13.

Table 6-5. Round 2 outcome by interview break status in Round 1, Panel 12 and Panel 13

	Panel 12		Panel 13	
	Break Status in Round 1	Round 2 Response Rate	Break Status in Round 1	Round 2 Response Rate
Full Sample	5,951	92.4	8,274	94.6
No Break	5,165	92.6	7,390	94.9
Legal Break	454	90.0	534	92.3
Illegal Break	332	91.8	350	92.8

Table 6-6 shows the Round 2 response rates for households that cooperated in Round 1 with no reported refusal and those that cooperated only after having refused at least once. In both panels, the difference between the response rates for the two groups is greater than the differences in Tables 6-4 and 6-5: 11 percent in Panel 12 and 6.6 percent in Panel 13. This suggests that an initial refusal in Round 1 – which typically occurs *before* the interview begins – was more likely to affect the Round 2 outcome than administration time or the occurrence of interruptions in the Round 1 interview, factors that come into play only after the interview has begun. Table 6-6 also shows the Round 3 response rate for the Panel 12 Round 1 interim refusals. In Round 3 the difference in cooperation rate decreased to 2.7 percent.

Table 6-6. Later round outcomes by 'ever refused' status in Round 1, Panel 12 and Panel 13

	Panel 12				Panel 13	
	Ever Refused in Round 1	Round 2 Response Rate	Ever Refused in Round 1	Round 3 Response Rate	Ever Refused in Round 1	Round 2 Response Rate
Full Sample	6,085		5,703		8,274	
No	5,517	93.2	5,227	94.7	7,722	95.1
Yes	568	82.2	476	92.0	552	88.5

Table 6-7 shows the Round 2 response rates by the month in which the Round 1 interviews were completed. Both panels show the same pattern of gradual decline in response rate as the field period continues, with the lowest response rate among those households completed during the last month of Round 1. It seems likely that many of these late cooperators were completed late in the field period because they were 'difficult' in some respect – hard to locate, hard to find at home, or reluctant to participate. These types of difficulty – like the interim refusal in Round 1-- likely persisted to some extent in Round 2.

Table 6-7. Round 2 outcome by month of Round 1 complete, Panel 12 and Panel 13

Round 1 Interview Month	Panel 12		Panel 13	
	Round 1 Completes	Round 2 Response Rate	Round 1 Completes	Round 2 Response Rate
Full Sample	6,085	92.2	8,274	94.6
Jan	2	100.0	5	100.0
Feb	1,626	95.6	2,184	96.3
Mar	1,769	94.0	2,763	95.5
Apr	940	91.7	1,535	94.2
May	638	90.2	841	93.5
Jun	631	87.1	583	91.0
Jul	479	83.8	363	88.0

Utilization

Several new reports were implemented at the start of Panel 12 to monitor the health care event utilization levels captured with the new instrument. These reports, with unweighted comparisons to prior panels, showed Panel 12 utilization levels consistently lower than the earlier panels and prompted an ongoing investigation of the differences. That investigation has had to address factors such as varying reference periods within a data collection round, the fact that the Panel 12 sample was drawn from a new set of NHIS PSUs than the prior panels, and the fact that the composition of the demographic domains within the Panel 12 sample differed from prior panels. To support the investigation, Westat accelerated development of full-year data files and a full-year weight for the first year of Panel 12 and parallel data for Panel 11. The investigation is still in progress; for this methodology report, we provide a limited summary of the unweighted utilization data for the rounds completed through the end of 2008.

Table 6-8 summarizes two unweighted measures of utilization: average total events per person, and average office-based events per person for Panels 9-13. The figures in the tables are taken from end-of-round operational reports, with numerators representing all events or all office-based events reported during the round and the denominators representing all persons in participating households, regardless of whether they

reported any events. The measures have not been standardized to adjust for differences in the number of days in a given round or a given person's reference period. The table shows some degree of variation from panel to panel in the years before the new application was introduced, but also shows means for Panels 12 and 13 that are consistently lower than those of the earlier panels.

Table 6-8a. Utilization comparison: mean total events per person (excluding prescribed medicines) by panel and round (unweighted)

	Panel 9	Panel 10	Panel 11	Panel 12	Panel 13
Round 1	1.901	1.752	1.892	1.719	1.571
Round 2	3.037	3.131	3.122	2.860	2.719
Round 3	3.117	2.910	3.197	2.682	
Round 4	3.137	2.972	2.951	2.806	

Table 6-8b. Utilization comparison: office-based physician events per person by panel and round (unweighted)

	Panel 9	Panel 10	Panel 11	Panel 12	Panel 13
Round 1	1.286	1.206	1.307	1.158	1.069
Round 2	2.146	2.206	2.194	1.988	1.917
Round 3	2.123	2.009	2.220	1.809	
Round 4	2.181	2.092	2.077	1.977	

Tables 6-9a and 6-9b provide a breakout of person-level utilization means, for all events and for office-based events by sample domain.

Table 6-9a. Utilization comparison, Round 1 mean total events per person for all events (excluding prescribed medicines) by sample domain

	Panel 10	Panel 11	Panel 12	Panel 13
Asian	1.473	1.399	1.328	1.328
Low income	1.441	1.589	1.393	1.386
Hispanic	1.349	1.314	1.262	1.184
Black	1.564	1.593	1.501	1.397
Other	2.218	2.456	2.149	2.123
Total	1.752	1.892	1.719	1.571

Table 6-9b. Utilization comparison, Round 1 mean office-based events per person, by sample domain

	Panel 10	Panel 11	Panel 12	Panel 13
Asian	1.033	0.914	0.892	0.858
Low income	0.975	1.068	0.918	0.936
Hispanic	0.959	0.941	0.873	0.814
Black	1.024	1.067	0.970	0.908
Other	1.540	1.720	1.460	1.476
Total	1.206	1.307	1.158	1.069

Appendix A

Comprehensive Tables – Household Survey

Table A-1. Data collection periods and starting RU-level sample sizes, all panels

January-June 1996	10,799	July-December 1996	9,485
Panel 1 Round 1	10,799	Panel 1 Round 2	9,485
January-June 1997	15,689	July-December 1997	14,657
Panel 1 Round 3	9,228	Panel 1 Round 4	9,019
Panel 2 Round 1	6,461	Panel 2 Round 2	5,638
January-June 1998	19,269	July-December 1998	9,871
Panel 1 Round 5	8,477	Panel 2 Round 4	5,290
Panel 2 Round 3	5,382	Panel 3 Round 2	4,581
Panel 3 Round 1	5,410		
January-June 1999	17,612	July-December 1999	10,161
Panel 2 Round 5	5,127	Panel 3 Round 4	4,243
Panel 3 Round 3	5,382	Panel 4 Round 2	5,918
Panel 4 Round 1	7,103		
January-June 2000	15,447	July-December 2000	10,222
Panel 3 Round 5	4,183	Panel 4 Round 4	5,567
Panel 4 Round 3	5,731	Panel 5 Round 2	4,655
Panel 5 Round 1	5,533		
January-June 2001	21,069	July-December 2001	13,777
Panel 4 Round 5	5,547	Panel 5 Round 4	4,426
Panel 5 Round 3	4,496	Panel 6 Round 2	9,351
Panel 6 Round 1	11,026		
January-June 2002	21,915	July-December 2002	15,968
Panel 5 Round 5	4,393	Panel 6 Round 4	8,977
Panel 6 Round 3	9,183	Panel 7 Round 2	6,991
Panel 7 Round 1	8,339		
January-June 2003	24,315	July-December 2003	13,814
Panel 6 Round 5	8,830	Panel 7, Round 4	6,655
Panel 7 Round 3	6,779	Panel 8, Round 2	7,159
Panel 8 Round 1	8,706		
January-June 2004	22,552	July-December 2004	14,068
Panel 7 Round 5	6,578	Panel 8, Round 4	6,878
Panel 8 Round 3	7,035	Panel 9, Round 2	7,190
Panel 9 Round 1	8,939		
January-June 2005	22,548	July-December 2005	13,991
Panel 8 Round 5	6,795	Panel 9, Round 4	6,843
Panel 9 Round 3	7,005	Panel 10, Round 2	7,148
Panel 10 Round 1	8,748		
January-June 2006	23,278	July-December 2006	14,280
Panel 9 Round 5	6,703	Panel 10 Round 4	6,708
Panel 10 Round 3	6,921	Panel 11 Round 2	7,572
Panel 11 Round 1	9,654		
January-June 2007	21,326	July-December 2007	12,906
Panel 10 Round 5	6,596	Panel 11 Round 4	7,005
Panel 11 Round 3	7,263	Panel 12 Round 2	5,901
Panel 12 Round 1	7,467		

Table A-1. Data collection periods and starting RU-level sample sizes, all panels (continued)

January-June 2008	22,414	July-December 2008	13,384
Panel 11 Round 5	6,895	Panel 12 Round 4	5,376
Panel 12 Round 3	5,580	Panel 13 Round 2	8,008
Panel 13 Round 1	9,939		

Table A-2. MEPS household survey data collection results, all panels

Panel/round		Original sample	Split cases (movers)	Student cases	Out-of-scope cases	Net sample	Completes	Average interviewer hours/complete	Response rate (%)
Panel 1	Round 1	10,799	675	125	165	11,434	9,496	10.4	83.1
	Round 2	9,485	310	74	101	9,768	9,239	8.7	94.6
	Round 3	9,228	250	28	78	9,428	9,031	8.6	95.8
	Round 4	9,019	261	33	89	9,224	8,487	8.5	92.0
	Round 5	8,477	80	5	66	8,496	8,369	6.5	98.5
Panel 2	Round 1	6,461	431	71	151	6,812	5,660	12.9	83.1
	Round 2	5,638	204	27	54	5,815	5,395	9.1	92.8
	Round 3	5,382	166	15	52	5,511	5,296	8.5	96.1
	Round 4	5,290	105	27	65	5,357	5,129	8.3	95.7
	Round 5	5,127	38	2	56	5,111	5,049	6.7	98.8
Panel 3	Round 1	5,410	349	44	200	5,603	4,599	12.7	82.1
	Round 2	4,581	106	25	39	4,673	4,388	8.3	93.9
	Round 3	4,382	102	4	42	4,446	4,249	7.3	95.5
	Round 4	4,243	86	17	33	4,313	4,184	6.7	97.0
	Round 5	4,183	23	1	26	4,181	4,114	5.6	98.4

A-3

Table A-2. MEPS household survey data collection results, all panels (continued)

Panel/round		Original sample	Split cases (movers)	Student cases	Out-of-scope cases	Net sample	Completes	Average interviewer hours/complete	Response rate (%)
Panel 4	Round 1	7,103	371	64	134	7,404	5,948	10.9	80.3
	Round 2	5,918	197	47	40	6,122	5,737	7.2	93.7
	Round 3	5,731	145	10	39	5,847	5,574	6.9	95.3
	Round 4	5,567	133	35	39	5,696	5,540	6.8	97.3
	Round 5	5,547	52	4	47	5,556	5500	6.0	99.0
Panel 5	Round 1	5,533	258	62	103	5,750	4,670	11.1	81.2
	Round 2	4,655	119	27	27	4,774	4,510	7.7	94.5
	Round 3	4,496	108	17	24	4,597	4,437	7.2	96.5
	Round 4	4,426	117	20	41	4,522	4,396	7.0	97.2
	Round 5	4,393	47	12	32	4,420	4,357	5.5	98.6
Panel 6	Round 1	11,026	595	135	200	11,556	9,382	10.8	81.2
	Round 2	9,351	316	49	50	9,666	9,222	7.2	95.4
	Round 3	9,183	215	23	41	9,380	9,001	6.5	96.0
	Round 4	8,977	174	32	66	9,117	8,843	6.6	97.0
	Round 5	8,830	94	14	46	8,892	8,781	5.6	98.8

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Table A-2. MEPS household survey data collection results, all panels (continued)

Panel/round		Original sample	Split cases (movers)	Student cases	Out-of-scope cases	Net sample	Completes	Average interviewer hours/complete	Response rate (%)
Panel 7	Round 1	8,339	417	76	122	8,710	7,008	10.0	80.5
	Round 2	6,991	190	40	24	7,197	6,802	7.2	94.5
	Round 3	6,779	169	21	32	6,937	6,673	6.5	96.2
	Round 4	6,655	133	17	34	6,771	6,593	7.0	97.4
	Round 5	6,578	79	11	39	6,629	6,529	5.7	98.5
Panel 8	Round 1	8,706	441	73	175	9,045	7,177	10.0	79.3
	Round 2	7,159	218	52	36	7,393	7,049	7.2	95.4
	Round 3	7,035	150	13	33	7,165	6,892	6.5	96.2
	Round 4	6,878	149	27	53	7,001	6,799	7.3	97.1
	Round 5	6,795	71	8	41	6,833	6,726	6.0	98.4
Panel 9	Round 1	8,939	417	73	179	9,250	7,205	10.5	77.9
	Round 2	7,190	237	40	40	7,427	7,027	7.7	94.6
	Round 3	7,005	189	24	31	7,187	6,861	7.1	95.5
	Round 4	6,843	142	23	44	6,964	6,716	7.4	96.5
	Round 5	6,703	60	8	43	6,728	6,627	6.1	98.5

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Table A-2. MEPS household survey data collection results, all panels (continued)

Panel/round		Original sample	Split cases (movers)	Student cases	Out-of-scope cases	Net sample	Completes	Average interviewer hours/complete	Response rate (%)
Panel 10	Round 1	8,748	430	77	169	9,086	7,175	11.0	79.0
	Round 2	7,148	219	36	22	7,381	6,940	7.8	94.0
	Round 3	6,921	156	10	31	7,056	6,727	6.8	95.3
	Round 4	6,708	155	13	34	6,842	6,590	7.3	96.3
	Round 5	6,596	55	9	38	6,622	6,461	6.2	97.6
Panel 11	Round 1	9,654	399	81	162	9,972	7,585	11.5	76.1
	Round 2	7,572	244	42	24	7,834	7,276	7.8	92.9
	Round 3	7,263	170	15	25	7,423	7,007	6.9	94.4
	Round 4	7,005	139	14	36	7,122	6,898	7.2	96.9
	Round 5	6,895	51	7	44	6,905	6,781	5.5	98.2
Panel 12	Round 1	7,467	331	86	172	7,712	5,901	14.2	76.5
	Round 2	5,901	157	27	27	6,058	5,584	9.1	92.2
	Round 3	5,580	105	13	12	5,686	5,383	8.1	94.7
	Round 4	5,376	102	12	16	5,474	5,267	8.8	96.2

Table A-2. MEPS household survey data collection results, all panels (continued)

Panel/round		Original sample	Split cases (movers)	Student cases	Out-of-scope cases	Net sample	Completes	Average interviewer hours/complete	Response rate (%)
Panel 13	Round 1	9,939	502	97	213	10,325	8,017	12.2	77.6
	Round 2	8,008	220	47	23	8,252	7,809	9.0	94.6

Table A-3. Signing rates for medical provider authorization forms

Panel/round		Authorization forms requested	Authorization forms signed	Signing rate (%)
Panel 1	Round 1	3,562	2,624	73.7
	Round 2	19,874	14,145	71.2
	Round 3	17,722	12,062	68.1
	Round 4	17,133	10,542	61.5
	Round 5	12,544	6,763	53.9
Panel 2	Round 1	2,735	1,788	65.4
	Round 2	13,461	9,433	70.1
	Round 3	11,901	7,537	63.3
	Round 4	11,164	6,485	58.1
	Round 5	8,104	4,244	52.4
Panel 3	Round 1	2,078	1,349	64.9
	Round 2	10,335	6,463	62.5
	Round 3	8,716	4,797	55.0
	Round 4	8,761	4,246	48.5
	Round 5	6,913	2,911	42.1
Panel 4	Round 1	2,400	1,607	67.0
	Round 2	12,711	8,434	66.4
	Round 3	11,078	6,642	60.0
	Round 4	11,047	6,888	62.4
	Round 5	8,684	5,096	58.7
Panel 5	Round 1	1,243	834	67.1
	Round 2	14,008	9,618	68.7
	Round 3	12,869	8,301	64.5
	Round 4	13,464	9,170	68.1
	Round 5	10,888	7,025	64.5
Panel 6	Round 1	2,783	2,012	72.3
	Round 2	29,861	22,872	76.6
	Round 3	26,068	18,219	69.9
	Round 4	27,146	20,082	74.0
	Round 5	21,022	14,581	69.4

Table A-3. Signing rates for medical provider authorization forms (continued)

Panel/round		Authorization forms requested	Authorization forms signed	Signing rate (%)
Panel 7	Round 1	2,298	1,723	75.0
	Round 2	22,302	17,557	78.7
	Round 3	19,312	13,896	72.0
	Round 4	16,934	13,725	81.1
	Round 5	14,577	11,099	76.1
Panel 8	Round 1	2,287	1,773	77.5
	Round 2	22,533	17,802	79.0
	Round 3	19,530	14,064	72.0
	Round 4	19,718	14,599	74.0
	Round 5	15,856	11,106	70.0
Panel 9	Round 1	2,253	1,681	74.6
	Round 2	22,668	17,522	77.3
	Round 3	19,601	13,672	69.8
	Round 4	20,147	14,527	72.1
	Round 5	15,963	10,720	67.2
Panel 10	Round 1	2,068	1,443	69.8
	Round 2	22,582	17,090	75.7
	Round 3	18,967	13,396	70.6
	Round 4	19,087	13,296	69.7
	Round 5	15,787	10,476	66.4
Panel 11	Round 1	2,154	1,498	69.5
	Round 2	23,957	17,742	74.1
	Round 3	20,756	13,400	64.6
	Round 4	21,260	14,808	69.7
	Round 5	16,793	11,482	68.4
Panel 12	Round 1	1,695	1,066	62.9
	Round 2	17,787	12,524	70.4
	Round 3	15,291	10,006	65.4
	Round 4	15,692	10,717	68.3

Table A-3. Signing rates for medical provider authorization forms (continued)

Panel/round		Authorization forms requested	Authorization forms signed	Signing rate (%)
Panel 13	Round 1	2,217	1,603	72.3
	Round 2	24,357	18,566	76.2

Table A-4. Signing rates for pharmacy authorization forms

Panel/round		Permission forms requested	Permission forms signed	Signing rate (%)
Panel 1	Round 3	19,913	14,468	72.7
	Round 5	8,685	6,002	69.1
Panel 2	Round 3	12,241	8,694	71.0
	Round 5	8,640	6,297	72.9
Panel 3	Round 3	9,016	5,929	65.8
	Round 5	7,569	5,200	68.7
Panel 4	Round 3	11,856	8,280	69.8
	Round 5	10,688	8,318	77.8
Panel 5	Round 3	9,248	6,852	74.1
	Round 5	8,955	7,174	80.1
Panel 6	Round 3	19,305	15,313	79.3
	Round 5	17,981	14,864	82.7
Panel 7	Round 3	14,456	11,611	80.3
	Round 5	13,428	11,210	83.5
Panel 8	Round 3	14,391	11,533	80.1
	Round 5	13,422	11,049	82.3
Panel 9	Round 3	14,334	11,189	78.1
	Round 5	13,416	10,893	81.2
Panel 10	Round 3	13,928	10,706	76.9
	Round 5	12,869	10,260	79.7
Panel 11	Round 3	14,937	11,328	75.8
	Round 5	13,778	11,332	82.3

Table A-4. Signing rates for pharmacy authorization forms (continued)

Panel 12	Round 3	10,840	8,242	76.0
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Table A-5. Results of self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) collection

Panel/round		SAQs requested	SAQs completed	SAQs refused	Other nonresponse	Response rate (%)
Panel 1	Round 2	16,577	9,910	-	-	59.8
	Round 3	6,032	1,469	840	3,723	24.3
	Combined, 1996	16,577	11,379	-	-	68.6
Panel 4*	Round 4	13,936	12,265	288	1,367	87.9
	Round 5	1,683	947	314	422	56.3
	Combined, 2000	13,936	13,212	-	-	94.8
Panel 5*	Round 2	11,239	9,833	191	1,213	86.9
	Round 3	1,314	717	180	417	54.6
	Combined, 2000	11,239	10,550	-	-	93.9
	Round 4	7,812	6,790	198	824	86.9
	Round 5	1,022	483	182	357	47.3
	Combined, 2001	7,812	7,273	380	1,181	93.1
Panel 6	Round 2	16,577	14,233	412	1,932	85.9
	Round 3	2,143	1,213	230	700	56.6
	Combined, 2001	16,577	15,446	642	2,632	93.2
	Round 4	15,687	13,898	362	1,427	88.6
	Round 5	1,852	967	377	508	52.2
	Combined, 2002	15,687	14,865	739	1,935	94.8
Panel 7	Round 2	12,093	10,478	196	1,419	86.6
	Round 3	1,559	894	206	459	57.3
	Combined, 2002	12,093	11,372	402	1,878	94.0
	Round 4	11,703	10,125	285	1,292	86.5
	Round 5	1,493	786	273	434	52.7
	Combined, 2003	11,703	10,911	558	1,726	93.2
Panel 8	Round 2	12,533	10,765	203	1,565	85.9
	Round 3	1,568	846	234	488	54.0
	Combined, 2003	12,533	11,611	437	2,053	92.6
	Round 4	11,996	10,534	357	1,105	87.8
	Round 5	1,400	675	344	381	48.2
	Combined, 2004	11,996	11,209	701	1,486	93.4
Panel 9	Round 2	12,541	10,631	381	1,529	84.8
	Round 3	1,670	886	287	496	53.1
	Combined, 2004	12,541	11,517	668	2,025	91.9
	Round 4	11,913	10,357	379	1,177	86.9
	Round 5	1,478	751	324	403	50.8
	Combined, 2005	11,913	11,108	703	1,580	93.2

*Totals represent combined collection of the SAQ and the parent-administered questionnaire (PAQ).

Table A-5. Results of self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) collection (continued)

Panel/round		SAQs requested	SAQs completed	SAQs refused	Other nonresponse	Response rate (%)
Panel 10	Round 2	12,360	10,503	391	1,466	85.0
	Round 3	1,626	787	280	559	48.4
	Combined, 2005	12,360	11,290	671	2025	91.3
	Round 4	11,726	10,081	415	1,230	86.0
	Round 5	1,516	696	417	403	45.9
	Combined, 2006	11,726	10,777	832	1,633	91.9
Panel 11	Round 2	13,146	10,924	452	1,770	83.1
	Round 3	1,908	948	349	611	49.7
	Combined, 2006	13,146	11,872	801	2,381	90.3
	Round 4	12,479	10,771	622	1086	86.3
	Round 5	1,621	790	539	292	48.7
	Combined, 2007	12,479	11,561			92.6
Panel 12	Round 2	10,061	8,419	502	1,140	83.7
	Round 3	1,460	711	402	347	48.7
	Combined, 2007	10,061	9,130			90.7
	Round 4	9,550	8,303	577	670	86.9
Panel 13	Round 2	14,410	12,541	707	1,162	87.0

*Totals represent combined collection of the SAQ and the parent-administered questionnaire (PAQ).

Table A-6. Results of Diabetes Care Supplement (DCS) collection*

Panel/round		DCSs requested	DCSs completed	Response rate (%)
Panel 4	Round 5	696	631	90.7
Panel 5	Round 3	550	508	92.4
	Round 5	570	500	87.7
Panel 6	Round 3	1,166	1,000	85.8
	Round 5	1,202	1,166	97.0
Panel 7	Round 3	870	848	97.5
	Round 5	869	820	94.4
Panel 8	Round 3	971	885	91.1
	Round 5	977	894	91.5
Panel 9	Round 3	1,003	909	90.6
	Round 5	904	806	89.2
Panel 10	Round 3	1,060	939	88.6
	Round 5	1,078	965	89.5
Panel 11	Round 3	1,188	1,030	86.7
	Round 5	1,182	1,053	89.1
Panel 12	Round 3	917	825	90.0

*Tables represent combined DCS/proxy DCS collection.

Table A-7. Calls to respondent information line

Reason for call	Spring 2000 (Panel 5 Round 1, Panel 4 Round 3, Panel 3 Round 5)				Fall 2000 (Panel 5 Round 2, Panel 4 Round 4)	
	Round 1		Rounds 3 and 5		Rounds 2 and 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address change	23	4.0	13	8.3	8	5.7
Appointment	37	6.5	26	16.7	28	19.9
Request callback	146	25.7	58	37.2	69	48.9
Refusal	183	32.2	20	12.8	12	8.5
Willing to participate	10	1.8	2	1.3	0	0.0
Other	157	27.6	35	22.4	8	5.7
Report a respondent deceased	5	0.9	1	0.6	0	0.0
Request a Spanish-speaking interview	8	1.4	1	0.6	0	0.0
Request SAQ help	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	11.3
Total	569		156		141	

Reason for call	Spring 2001 (Panel 6 Round 1, Panel 5 Round 3, Panel 4 Round 5)				Fall 2001 (Panel 6 Round 2, Panel 5 Round 4)	
	Round 1		Rounds 3 and 5		Rounds 2 and 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address/telephone change	27	3.7	17	12.7	56	15.7
Appointment	119	16.2	56	41.8	134	37.5
Request callback	259	35.3	36	26.9	92	25.8
No message	8	1.1	3	2.2	0	0.0
Other	29	4.0	7	5.2	31	8.7
Request SAQ help	0	0.0	2	1.5	10	2.8
Special needs	5	0.7	3	2.2	0	0.0
Refusal	278	37.9	10	7.5	25	7.0
Willing to participate	8	1.1	0	0.0	9	2.5
Total	733		134		357	

Reason for call	Spring 2002 (Panel 7 Round 1, Panel 6 Round 3, Panel 5 Round 5)				Fall 2002 (Panel 7 Round 2, Panel 6 Round 4)	
	Round 1		Rounds 3 and 5		Rounds 2 and 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address/telephone change	28	4.5	29	13.9	66	16.7
Appointment	77	12.5	71	34.1	147	37.1
Request callback	210	34.0	69	33.2	99	25.0
No message	6	1.0	3	1.4	5	1.3
Other	41	6.6	17	8.2	10	2.5
Request SAQ help	0	0.0	0	0.0	30	7.6
Special needs	1	0.2	0	0.0	3	0.8
Refusal	232	37.6	14	6.7	29	7.3
Willing to participate	22	3.6	5	2.4	7	1.8
Total	617		208		396	

Table A-7. Calls to respondent information line (continued)

Reason for call	Spring 2003 (Panel 8 Round 1, Panel 7 Round 3, Panel 6 Round 5)				Fall 2003 (Panel 8 Round 2, Panel 7 Round 4)	
	Round 1		Rounds 3 and 5		Rounds 2 and 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address/Telephone change	20	4.2	33	13.7	42	17.9
Appointment	83	17.5	87	36.1	79	33.8
Request callback	165	34.9	100	41.5	97	41.5
No message	16	3.4	7	2.9	6	2.6
Other	9	1.9	8	3.3	3	1.3
Request SAQ help	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.4
Special needs	5	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Refusal	158	33.4	6	2.5	6	2.6
Willing to participate	17	3.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	473		241		234	

Reason for call	Spring 2004 (Panel 9 Round 1, Panel 8 Round 3, Panel 7 Round 5)				Fall 2004 (Panel 9 Round 2, Panel 8 Round 4)	
	Round 1		Rounds 3 and 5		Rounds 2 and 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address/telephone change	8	1.6	26	13.2	42	10.9
Appointment	67	13.3	76	38.6	153	39.7
Request callback	158	31.5	77	39.1	139	36.1
No message	9	1.8	5	2.5	16	4.2
Other	8	1.6	5	2.5	5	1.3
Proxy needed	5	1.0	2	1.0	0	0.0
Request SAQ help	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.5
Special needs	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Refusal	228	45.4	6	3.0	27	7.0
Willing to participate	19	3.8	0	0.0	1	0.3
Total	502		197		385	

Table A-7. Calls to respondent information line (continued)

Reason for call	Spring 2005 (Panel 10 Round 1, Panel 9 Round 3, Panel 8 Round 5)				Fall 2005 (Panel 10 Round 2, Panel 9 Round 4)	
	Round 1		Rounds 3 and 5		Rounds 2 and 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address/telephone change	16	3.3	23	8.7	27	6.8
Appointment	77	15.7	117	44.3	177	44.4
Request callback	154	31.4	88	33.3	126	31.6
No message	14	2.9	11	4.2	28	7.0
Other	13	2.7	1	0.4	8	2.0
Proxy needed	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Request SAQ help	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3
Special needs	1	0.2	1	0.4	0	0.0
Refusal	195	39.8	20	7.6	30	7.5
Willing to participate	20	4.1	3	1.1	2	0.5
Total	490		264		399	

Reason for call	Spring 2006 (Panel 11 Round 1, Panel 10 Round 3, Panel 9 Round 5)				Fall 2006 (Panel 11 Round 2, Panel 10 Round 4)	
	Round 1		Rounds 3 and 5		Rounds 2 and 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address/telephone change	7	1.3	24	7.5	11	4.1
Appointment	61	11.3	124	39.0	103	38.1
Request callback	146	27.1	96	30.2	101	37.4
No message	72	13.4	46	14.5	21	7.8
Other	16	3.0	12	3.8	8	3.0
Proxy needed	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Request SAQ help	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Special needs	4	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Refusal	216	40.1	15	4.7	26	9.6
Willing to participate	17	3.2	1	0.3	0	0.0
Total	539		318		270	

Table A-7. Calls to respondent information line (continued)

Reason for call	Spring 2007 (Panel 12 Round 1, Panel 11 Round 3, Panel 10 Round 5)				Fall 2007 (Panel 12 Round 2, Panel 11 Round 4)	
	Round 1		Rounds 3 and 5		Rounds 2 and 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address/telephone change	8	2.1	21	7.3	23	7.6
Appointment	56	14.6	129	44.8	129	42.6
Request callback	72	18.8	75	26.0	88	29.0
No message	56	14.6	37	12.8	33	10.9
Other	20	5.2	15	5.2	6	2.0
Proxy needed	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Request SAQ help	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Special needs	5	1.3	0	0.0	1	0.3
Refusal	160	41.8	10	3.5	21	6.9
Willing to participate	6	1.6	1	0.3	2	0.7
Total	383		288		303	

Reason for call	Spring 2008 (Panel 13 Round 1, Panel 12 Round 3, Panel 11 Round 5)				Fall 2008 (Panel 13 Round 2, Panel 12 Round 4)	
	Round 1		Rounds 3 and 5		Rounds 2 and 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address/telephone change	20	3.4	12	4.7	21	5.7
Appointment	92	15.5	117	45.9	148	39.9
Request callback	164	27.6	81	31.8	154	41.5
No message	82	13.8	20	7.8	22	5.9
Other	13	2.2	12	4.7	8	2.2
Proxy needed	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Request SAQ help	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Special needs	4	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Refusal	196	32.9	13	5.1	18	4.9
Willing to participate	24	4.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	595		255		371	