



Agency for Healthcare
Research and Quality
540 Gaither Road
Rockville, MD 20850

October, 2008

<Partner>

<Title>

<Street Address>

<City, State, Zip Code>

Dear <<Mr. Ms. Dr.>>:

You may remember that at the HCUP Partners meeting in April, we discussed our plan to include selected American Hospital Association (AHA) data elements in future releases of the HCUP nationwide databases, the Nationwide Inpatient Sample (NIS) and the Kids' Inpatient Database (KID). The purpose of this package is to update you on the data elements that will be added to the NIS and KID this year, and to obtain your permission to release selected data elements that will significantly enhance the value of HCUP data and improve their use for research purposes.

Let me describe briefly the rationale for putting additional hospital-level data elements on the HCUP nationwide databases. Since the release of the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) report, *Crossing the Quality Chasm* (IOM, 2001) which identified problems of quality as a systems problem rather than an issue of individual incompetence, researchers and policy makers alike have turned their attention to organizations as important factors in the safe, effective delivery of health services. Information on hospital-level characteristics in the NIS and KID is currently limited to region of the U.S., size, urban-rural designation, teaching status, and ownership. The addition of other hospital-level variables will greatly increase the research value of these nationwide databases for a better understanding of how hospital organizational factors affect the cost, quality, safety, and efficiency of care.

We have restricted the addition of new data elements to those that can be obtained or calculated from the AHA Annual Survey Database or directly from the NIS or KID. In other words, **we are not asking HCUP Partners to submit additional data elements.**

AHRQ is requesting permission to release the following data elements from the AHA database on the HCUP nationwide databases:

- Multi-hospital system membership, and system cluster code. System membership is an indicator of 1 or 0, with 1 for being member of a multi-hospital system and 0 for not. System cluster has five categories based on how much the system differentiates and centralizes its hospital services, physician arrangements, and insurance products, from 1 for centralized health systems to 5 for independent health systems.
- RN, LPN, and Nurse Aide FTEs per 1000 adjusted patient days
- Percentage of RNs among licensed nurses
- Percentage of surgeries performed in outpatient setting

AHRQ has obtained permission from AHA to release these data elements on the HCUP nationwide databases. We plan to start implementing the measures beginning with the 2007 NIS and 2009 KID, and they will continue to appear in future releases of these databases. Enclosed is an addendum to the HCUP MOA that lists the data elements that we will be releasing from the AHA database. We would like to reiterate that we are not requesting any new data elements from your state data. **Please review this list, initial it, and return it to us in the enclosed envelope.**

We would appreciate if you could submit the signed list by December 15, 2008. In the meantime, if you have any questions or if this timeframe is not adequate, please feel free to contact me at 301-427-1436 or Joanna.Jiang@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Joanna Jiang, Ph.D.
Center for Delivery, Organization and Markets

**HCUP DATA ELEMENTS FOR RELEASE IN
HCUP NATIONWIDE DATABASES
American Hospital Association Variables
<State Name>**

This list includes new data elements derived from the American Hospital Association (AHA) database that will be released as part of the HCUP’s nationwide databases, such as the Nationwide Inpatient Sample (NIS) and the Kids’ Inpatient Database (KID).

For each data element listed, **please enter your initials in the boxes below** to indicate whether HCUP may release the data element in nationwide databases. Alternatively, indicate whether HCUP may release in nationwide databases all data elements listed below, by **entering your initials here:** _____

Data Elements	Yes, HCUP may release in nationwide databases.	No, HCUP may not release in nationwide databases.
Hospital Characteristic data elements		
Multi-hospital system membership (indicates hospital is member of multi-hospital system)		
Multi-hospital system cluster code. Codes multi-hospital systems as one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized Health System • Centralized Physician/ Insurance Health System • Moderately Centralized Health System • Decentralized Health System • Independent Health System 		
Percentage of RN among licensed nurses (RNs and LPNs)		
RN FTEs per 1000 adjusted patient days		
LPN FTEs per 1000 adjusted patient days		
Nurse aides per 1000 adjusted patient days		
Provision of Outpatient Services data elements		
Percentage of all surgeries performed in outpatient setting		
Comments: <Include for Partners that restrict hospital identifiers.> Apply NIS restrictions for restricting hospital identifiers by randomly adding or subtracting from the value of the data element, if it is a continuous variable, so the hospital’s unique value is not disclosed. For outliers that could be identified, AHRQ will mask the values. Also, AHRQ will not disclose Multi-hospital System Membership and System Cluster Code if the combination of these two data elements uniquely identifies a hospital.		