Consider Each Year of the NRD as a Separate Sample
The patient linkage numbers (NRD_VisitLink) do not track the same patient across years of the NRD. Additionally, the hospital identifiers (HOSP_NRD) do not track the sample hospital across years of the NRD. Users should consider each year of the NRD as a separate sample.

Use Caution When Studying Readmissions for Patients Age 0
Information on patients aged 0 years is limited in the NRD because the patient linkage numbers for this age group are not reported in all SID used for the NRD. Records for patients aged 0 years are excluded from the NRD from more than half of the SID in 2010–2013 NRD and from 10 of the 22 SID in 2014 NRD. The weights for these discharges were often much higher than other discharges. For example in the 2010 NRD, the weights on discharges for patients aged 0 years range from 1 to 247, with an average weight of 19. In contrast, the weights for all other discharges in the 2010 NRD range from 1.0 to 27.6, with an average weight of 3. The range of discharge weights by age and sex are provided for each data year in the Introduction to the NRD under Appendix A, Table A.5.

Overlapping Stays
In the 2010–2013 NRD, there are a small number of instances of overlapping stays (i.e., adding the length of stay (LOS) to the NRD timing variable (NRD_DaystoEvent) for a specific patient (NRD_VisitLink) produces a number larger than the NRD_DaystoEvent value of the patient’s subsequent hospitalization). All of these records involve combined records (SAMEDAYEVENT > 0). During the creation of the NRD, pairs of records that indicate a transfer or same-day event in which the discharge date of one record equals the admission date of the next record for the same patient were collapsed. In the collapse process, we have inadvertently retained some overlapping stays in the NRD. These stays should be considered a continuation of care and not separate events. This affects 404 records in the 2013 NRD, 423 records in the 2012 NRD, 416 records in the 2011 NRD, and 409 records in the 2010 NRD.

Procedure Day Longer than the Length of Stay
In the 2014 NRD, there are 354 records in which one of the procedure days (PRDAY1-PRDAY15) is more than 3 days after the end of the stay. HCUP typically allows the day of procedure to occur up to 4 days before the stay began (negative value -4) or up to 3 days after the stay ended (LOS + 3). Procedures performed prior to the admission may be bundled into the record because they are related to the inpatient stay. Allowing three days after the stay provides for observation time that would be allowable for Medicare payment. If the procedure day is greater than LOS+3, it should be considered invalid.

Using NRD_KEY to Link NRD Files within a Data Year
The NRD unique record identifier (data element KEY_NRD) can be used to link data elements from the Severity and Diagnosis/Procedure Groups files to the records on the Core file. The values of KEY_NRD contain similar, overlapping values in data years 2013 and 2014, but are unique in data years 2010–2012. NRD_KEY should only be used to link files within the same data year.