

Attachment E
Introductory Letter to Freestanding Ambulatory Surgery Center

Date
Dear XXXXXX,

I am writing to thank you for your continued participation in the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS) and to request your assistance in fielding a pretest of the National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS), also conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics. The National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS) is a new survey that will combine two long standing valuable data collection efforts, the National Hospital Discharge Survey and NHAMCS, and will collect data from both hospital-based and freestanding ambulatory surgery centers. The national estimates produced from this survey effort will allow policy-makers and researchers to monitor changes in the health care system, including the use of ambulatory surgery, and plan for more efficient delivery of services.

Your surgery center was selected for the pretest from a sample of freestanding ambulatory surgery centers across the United States. During the pretest, we will conduct an interview to collect descriptive data on your center's characteristics. Our staff will then abstract data from medical records on a sample of patient visits. Patient identifiers will be collected so that data can be linked to birth and death records and potentially linked to data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The information collected during the pretest will help shape the design of the full survey. CDC's National Center for Health Statistics is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the data collected for this study.

- All information collected will be held confidential according to Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42, U.S. Code, 242m(d)) and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (Title 5 of PL 107-347) and will be used for statistical purposes only. Provisions of the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act provide for a felony conviction and/or fine up to \$250,000 if this promise is violated.

Additionally, the Privacy Rule as mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) allows your center to participate in several ways.

- Disclosure of patient data is permitted for public health purposes.
- NHCS has been approved by the CDC/National Center for Health Statistics' Research Ethics Review Board.

The Field Manager assigned to your center from Westat, acting as our agent, will be contacting you soon about your center's voluntary participation in the pretest. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Kathy Chimes, the Westat Project Director (phone: (301) 251-4302, e-mail: chimesk1@westat.com) or Dr. Carol DeFrances, Team Leader, National Hospital Care Survey (phone: (301) 458-4440, e-mail: cdefrances@cdc.gov).

Sincerely,

Carol DeFrances, Ph. D.

Team Leader, National Hospital Care Survey