

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE 1995-1996 FILE DOCUMENTATION FOR  
THE NATIONAL AMBULATORY MEDICAL CARE SURVEY (NAMCS) AND  
THE NATIONAL HOSPITAL AMBULATORY MEDICAL CARE SURVEY (NHAMCS)**

Since their initial release, NAMCS and NHAMCS public use files have never contained sample design information because of confidentiality concerns. This limited the research potential of the data for users who wished to run statistical analyses using software such as SUDAAN and STATA. SUDAAN and STATA take into account the complex sample designs of surveys and thus require sample design information in order to run properly. They enable the user to compute variances, to perform logistic regressions, and to do other types of sophisticated statistical analysis.

Over the last 5 years, research has been conducted at NCHS in methods to include sample design information in the public use files for the NAMCS and the NHAMCS without creating unacceptable disclosure risks. Different techniques were developed, tested, and compared. The result was the adoption of a methodology that has as its primary component the collapsing of certain sample strata into larger groups that mask their identity.

The solution to the confidentiality problem has made it possible for NCHS to re-release NAMCS and NHAMCS public use files that now contain design information. The file names and file layouts are the same as previously published, but the design variables have been appended to the file according to the layout below. PSU is primary sampling unit.

**SUPPLEMENTAL RECORD LAYOUT FOR DESIGN VARIABLES ADDED TO  
NAMCS/NHAMCS PUBLIC USE FILES FOR 1995-1996**

Item No.	Field Length	File Location	Item Name	Description and Range
1	3	500-502	STRATM	PSU stratum marker (masked) 201-404
2	5	503-507	PSUM	PSU marker (masked) 1-49
3	4	508-511	YEAR	Survey year
4	1	512	SUBFILE	File indicator 1 = NAMCS, 2 = NHAMCS
5	2	513-514	PROSTRAT	Provider stratum marker 1-15 (NAMCS), 1-2 (NHAMCS)

6	4	515-518	PROVIDER	Provider code (assigned by ACSB; does not carry across survey years; does not carry across files for hospitals with both ED and OPD records). See ranges below.
7	1	519	DEPT	Hospital dept. code 1 (NAMCS and ED), 2 (OPD)
8	3	520-522	SU	Hospital sampling unit code See ranges below.
9	3	523-525	CLINIC	Hospital clinic code See ranges below.
10	2	526-527	POPPSUM	Stratum counts of PSUs (masked) -1, 1
11	3	528-530	POPSUM	Number of clinic sampling units within a hospital (masked) -1, 0
12	6	531-536	POPVISM	Estimated provider visit volume (masked) -1, 0
13	6	537-542	POPPOVM	Estimated count of in-scope providers within PSU (masked) See ranges below.

PROVIDER ranges:

	NAMCS	NHAMCS-OPD	NHAMCS-ED
1995	13-3732	1-230	1-392
1996	6-3178	1-235	1-390

SU ranges:

1995	1	1-117	1-38
1996	1	1-123	1-12

	NAMCS	NHAMCS-OPD	NHAMCS-ED
CLINIC ranges:			
1995	1	1-75	1-7
1996	1	1-91	1-7
POPPROVM ranges:			
1995	0-960950	0-360	0-368
1996	0-16980	0-368	0-360

Note that the variables STRATM, PSUM, YEAR, SUBFILE, PROSTRAT, PROVIDER, DEPT, SU, and CLINIC are all used in the SUDAAN NEST statement. The variables POPPSUM, POPPROVM, and POPSUM and POPVISM are used in the TOTCNT statement.

An example of the SUDAAN PROC, NEST, and TOTCNT statements is given below:

```

1  PROC CROSSTAB DATA=COMB1 DESIGN=WOR FILETYPE=SAS ;
2  NEST STRATM PSUM SUBFILE PROSTRAT YEAR PROVIDER DEPT SU
   CLINIC/MISSUNIT ;
3  TOTCNT POPPSUM _ZERO_ _ZERO_ _ZERO_ POPPROVM _ZERO_ POPSUM
   _ZERO_ POPVISM ;

```

We are also pleased to announce that we have created enhanced documentation for SAS users, consisting of new input statements, format statements, label statements, and format assignments. We are also working on providing the same level of documentation for SPSS users. These files can be downloaded from our Ambulatory Health Care Data website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/ahcd/ahcd1.htm>

For data users who wish to combine ambulatory care settings in a SAS run, an identifier for NAMCS, OPD, and ED records can be created using the variables SUBFILE and DEPT as follows:

```

if subfile=1 then setype=1;          /* defines NAMCS records */
if subfile=2 and dept=2 then setype=2; /* defines OPD records */
if subfile=2 and dept=1 then setype=3; /* defines ED records */

```

Some minor revisions have been made to these data files pursuant to releasing the masked design variables. These include changes to the variables PHYCODE on the NAMCS and HOSPCODE on the NHAMCS files. These are simply codes assigned to each physician or hospital on the file by the National Center for Health Statistics which enable users to group records according to provider.

Other than these variables, all other non-sample design variables should be the same as those released on the previous 1995-96 files.

For questions regarding the NAMCS and NHAMCS public use files, please contact the Ambulatory Statistics Branch at 301-458-4600 during regular working hours.