

**MEPS HC-034:
2001 P5R3/P6R1
Population Characteristics**

**Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Center for Cost and Financing Studies**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>		<u>Page</u>
A	DATA USE AGREEMENT.....	A-1
B	BACKGROUND	B-1
	1.0 Household Component	B-2
	2.0 Medical Provider Component	B-2
	3.0 Insurance Component	B-3
	4.0 Survey Management	B-3
C	TECHNICAL AND PROGRAMMING INFORMATION	C-1
	1.0 General Information.....	C-1
	2.0 Data File Information.....	C-2
	2.1 Codebook Structure.....	C-2
	2.2 Reserved Codes	C-2
	2.3 Codebook Format.....	C-3
	2.4 Variable Naming	C-3
	2.5 File Contents	C-4
	2.5.1 Survey Administration Variables	C-4
	2.5.2 Demographic Variables	C-10
	2.5.3 Health Status Variables	C-13
	2.5.4 Employment Variables	C-16
	2.5.5 Health Insurance Variables	C-19
	3.0 Survey Sample Information.....	C-20
	3.1 Sample Design and Response Rates	C-20
	3.1.1 Panel 5.....	C-21
	3.1.2 Panel 6.....	C-21
	3.1.3 Combined Panel Response	C-21
	3.2 Sample Weights	C-22
	3.2.1 Person Level Weight	C-22
	3.2.2 Family Level Weight	C-22

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>		<u>Page</u>
	3.2.2.1 Definition of MEPS Families	C-22
	3.2.2.2 Assignment of Weights.....	C-23
	3.2.2.3 Instructions to Create Family Estimates	C-23
	3.2.3 Relationship Between Person and Family Level Weights	C-24
3.3	Variance Estimation.....	C-24
D	VARIABLE-SOURCE CROSSWALK.....	D-1

A. DATA USE AGREEMENT

Individual identifiers have been removed from the micro-data contained in the files on this CD-ROM. Nevertheless, under sections 308 (d) and 903 (c) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 242m and 42 U.S.C. 299 a-1), data collected by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and/or the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) may not be used for any purpose other than for the purpose for which they were supplied; any effort to determine the identity of any reported cases is prohibited by law.

Therefore in accordance with the above referenced Federal Statute, it is understood that:

1. No one is to use the data in this data set in any way except for statistical reporting and analysis; and
2. If the identity of any person or establishment should be discovered inadvertently, then (a) no use will be made of this knowledge, (b) the Director Office of Management AHRQ will be advised of this incident, (c) the information that would identify any individual or establishment will be safeguarded or destroyed, as requested by AHRQ, and (d) no one else will be informed of the discovered identity; and
3. No one will attempt to link this data set with individually identifiable records from any data sets other than the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey or the National Health Interview Survey.

By using these data you signify your agreement to comply with the above stated statutorily based requirements with the knowledge that deliberately making a false statement in any matter within the jurisdiction of any department or agency of the Federal Government violates 18 U.S.C. 1001 and is punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000 or up to 5 years in prison.

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality requests that users cite AHRQ and the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey as the data source in any publications or research based upon these data.

B. BACKGROUND

The Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) provides nationally representative estimates of health care use, expenditures, sources of payment, and insurance coverage for the U.S. civilian non-institutionalized population. MEPS is cosponsored by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

MEPS is a family of three surveys. The Household Component (HC) is the core survey and forms the basis for the Medical Provider Component (MPC) and part of the Insurance Component (IC). Together these surveys yield comprehensive data that provide national estimates of the level and distribution of health care use and expenditures, support health services research, and can be used to assess health care policy implications.

MEPS is the third in a series of national probability surveys conducted by AHRQ on the financing and use of medical care in the United States. The National Medical Care Expenditure Survey (NMCES, also known as NMES-1) was conducted in 1977 and the National Medical Expenditure Survey (NMES-2) in 1987. Since 1996, MEPS continues this series with design enhancements and efficiencies that provide a more current data resource to capture the changing dynamics of the health care delivery and insurance system.

The design efficiencies incorporated into MEPS are in accordance with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Survey Integration Plan of June 1995, which focused on consolidating DHHS surveys, achieving cost efficiencies, reducing respondent burden, and enhancing analytical capacities. To advance these goals, MEPS includes linkage with the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) - a survey conducted by NCHS from which the sample for the MEPS HC is drawn - and enhanced longitudinal data collection for core survey components. The MEPS HC augments NHIS by selecting a sample of NHIS respondents, collecting additional data on their health care expenditures, and linking these data with additional information collected from the respondents' medical providers, employers, and insurance providers.

1.0 Household Component

The MEPS HC, a nationally representative survey of the U.S. civilian non-institutionalized population, collects medical expenditure data at both the person and household levels. The HC collects detailed data on demographic characteristics, health conditions, health status, use of medical care services, charges and payments, access to care, satisfaction with care, health insurance coverage, income, and employment.

The HC uses an overlapping panel design in which data are collected through a preliminary contact followed by a series of five rounds of interviews over a 2 ½-year period. Using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) technology, data on medical expenditures and use for 2 calendar years are collected from each household. This series of data collection rounds is launched each subsequent year on a new sample of households to provide overlapping panels of survey data and, when combined with other ongoing panels, will provide continuous and current estimates of health care expenditures.

The sampling frame for the MEPS HC is drawn from respondents to NHIS. NHIS provides a nationally representative sample of the U.S. civilian non-institutionalized population, with oversampling of Hispanics and blacks.

2.0 Medical Provider Component

The MEPS MPC supplements and/or replaces information on medical care events reported in the MEPS HC by contacting medical providers and pharmacies identified by household respondents. The MPC sample includes all home health agencies and pharmacies reported by HC respondents. Office-based physicians, hospitals, and hospital physicians are also included in the MPC but may be subsampled at various rates, depending on burden and resources, in certain years.

Data are collected on medical and financial characteristics of medical and pharmacy events reported by HC respondents. The MPC is conducted through telephone interviews and record abstraction.

3.0 Insurance Component

The MEPS IC collects data on health insurance plans obtained through private and public-sector employers. Data obtained in the IC include the number and types of private insurance plans offered, benefits associated with these plans, premiums, contributions by employers and employees, eligibility requirements, and employer characteristics.

Establishments participating in the MEPS IC are selected through three sampling frames:

- A list of employers or other insurance providers identified by MEPS HC respondents who report having private health insurance at the Round 1 interview.
- A Bureau of the Census list frame of private sector business establishments.
- The Census of Governments from Bureau of the Census.

To provide an integrated picture of health insurance, data collected from the first sampling frame (employers and insurance providers identified by MEPS HC respondents) are linked back to data provided by those respondents. Data from the two Census Bureau sampling frames are used to produce annual national and State estimates of the supply and cost of private health insurance available to American workers and to evaluate policy issues pertaining to health insurance. National estimates of employer contributions to group insurance from the MEPS IC are used in the computation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The MEPS IC is an annual panel survey. Data are collected from the selected organizations through a prescreening telephone interview, a mailed questionnaire, and a telephone follow-up for nonrespondents.

4.0 Survey Management

MEPS data are collected under the authority of the Public Health Service Act. They are edited and published in accordance with the confidentiality provisions of this act and the Privacy Act. NCHS provides consultation and technical assistance.

As soon as data collection and editing are completed, the MEPS survey data are released to the public in staged releases of summary reports, microdata files and compendiums of tables. Data are released through MEPSnet, an online interactive tool developed to give users the ability to statistically analyze MEPS data in real time. Summary reports and compendiums of tables are released as printed documents and electronic files. Microdata files are released on CD-ROM and/or electronic files.

Selected printed documents and public use file data on CD-ROMs are available through the AHRQ Publications Clearinghouse. Write or call:

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Be sure to specify the AHRQ number of the document or CD-ROM you are requesting.

Additional information on MEPS is available from the MEPS project manager or the MEPS public use data manager at the Center for Cost and Financing Studies, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

C. TECHNICAL AND PROGRAMMING INFORMATION

1.0 General Information

This documentation describes the sixth point in time data file to be released from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey Household Component (MEPS HC). Released as an ASCII file (with related SAS programming statements), and a SAS transport dataset, this public use file provides information on data collected on a nationally representative sample of the civilian, non-institutionalized population of the United States during the early part of 2001. The data consist of 2001 data obtained in Round 3 of Panel 5 and Round 1 of Panel 6 of the MEPS Household Component and contains variables pertaining to survey administration, demographics, employment, health status, and health insurance.

The following documentation offers a brief overview of the types and levels of data provided, the content and structure of the files, and programming information. It contains the following sections:

- Data File Information
- Survey Sample Information
- Variable/Questionnaire Crosswalk

A codebook of all the variables included on the 2001 point in time data file is provided in a separate document ([H34CB.PDF](#)).

[MEPS survey questionnaires](#), the [Household Survey Variable Locator](#), indicating the major MEPS data items on public use files that have been released to date, and a catalog of MEPS products are available on the MEPS web page (www.meps.ahrq.gov).

For more information on MEPS HC survey design, see S. Cohen, 1997; J. Cohen, 1997; and S. Cohen, 1996. For information on the MEPS MPC design, see S. Cohen, 1998.

2.0 Data File Information

This public use dataset contains variable and frequency distributions for a total of 35,378 persons (11,109 from Panel 5 Round 3 and 24,269 from Panel 6 Round 1). This count includes all household survey respondents who resided in eligible responding households. Of these persons, 34,173 were assigned a positive person level weight (10,589 from Panel 5 Round 3 and 23,584 from Panel 6 Round 1). For each variable both weighted and unweighted frequencies are provided. In conjunction with the weight variable (WGTSP13) provided on this file, data for these persons can be used to make estimates for the civilian, noninstitutionalized U.S. population as of the first half of 2001.

The records on this file can be linked to all MEPS public use data sets containing the same sample by the sample person identifier (DUPERSID). Some analysts may wish to use the 2001 data contained on this file in concert with previously released 2000 data to conduct longitudinal analysis. When using data from two MEPS public use files for the same individuals, use the most current MEPS weight and variance estimation variable to support the longitudinal comparisons.

2.1 Codebook Structure

The codebook and data file sequence lists variables in the following order:

- Unique person identifiers
- Demographic variables
- Health Status variables
- Employment variables
- Health Insurance variables
- Weight and variance estimation variables

2.2 Reserved Codes

The following reserved code values are used:

VALUE	DEFINITION
-1 INAPPLICABLE	Question was not asked due to skip pattern
-7 REFUSED	Question was asked and respondent refused to answer question

-8 DK	Question was asked and respondent did not know answer
-9 NOT ASCERTAINED	Interviewer did not record the data
-10 HOURLY WAGE >= \$57.69	Variable was top-coded for confidentiality

2.3 Codebook Format

This codebook describes an ASCII data set and provides the following programming identifiers for each variable:

IDENTIFIER	DESCRIPTION
Name	Variable name (maximum of 8 characters)
Description	Variable descriptor (maximum 40 characters)
Format	Number of bytes
Type	Type of data: numeric (indicated by NUM) or character (indicated by CHAR)
Start	Beginning column position of variable in record
End	Ending column position of variable in record

2.4 Variable Naming

In general, variable names reflect the content of the variable, with an 8 character limitation. All of the variables on this file (except some demographic variables and DUID, DUPERSID, PID, and KEYNESS) end in “13” to denote they are combination Panel 6 Round 1/Panel 5 Round 3 variables. For edited variables the “13” is followed by an “X” and are so noted in the variable label. Variables contained in this delivery were derived either from the questionnaire itself or from the CAPI. The source of each variable is identified in the section of the documentation entitled “E. Variable-Source Crosswalk”. Sources for each variable are indicated in one of four ways: (1) variables derived from CAPI or assigned in sampling are so indicated; (2) variables derived from complex algorithms associated with reenumeration are labeled “RE Section”; (3) variables that come from one or more specific questions have those numbers listed in the

“Source” column; (4) variables constructed from multiple questions using complex algorithms are labeled “Constructed” in the “Source” column.

2.5 File Contents

2.5.1 Survey Administration Variables

The survey administration variables contain information related to conducting the interview, household and family composition, and person-level and RU-level status codes. Data for the survey administration variables were derived from the sampling process, the CAPI programs, or were computed based on information provided by the respondent in the reenumeration section of the questionnaire. Most Survey Administration variables on this file are asked during every round of the MEPS interview. Variables in this delivery describe data for Panel 5 Round 3 and Panel 6 Round 1 in 2001.

The variable PANEL13 indicates the panel from which the data are derived. A value of 5 indicates Panel 5 Round 3 data and a value of 6 indicates Panel 6 Round 1 data.

Note that Round 3 of Panel 5 covers both the end of 2000 and the beginning of 2001. (When possible, the variables were constructed to represent data from the 2001 portion of Round 3.)

Dwelling Units, Reporting Units, and Families

The definition of Dwelling Units (DUs) in the MEPS Household Survey is generally consistent with the definition employed for the National Health Interview Survey. The dwelling unit ID (DUID) is a five-digit random ID number assigned after the case was sampled for MEPS. The person number (PID) uniquely identifies all persons within the dwelling unit. The variable DUPERSID is a combination of the variables DUID and PID, thus uniquely identifies each sampled person in MEPS.

A Reporting Unit (RU) is a person or group of persons in the sampled dwelling unit who are related by blood, marriage, adoption, foster care or other family association. Each RU is to be interviewed as a single entity for MEPS. Thus, the RU serves chiefly as a family-based “survey operations” unit rather than an analytic unit. Members of each RU within the DU are identified by the variable RULETR13. Regardless of the legal status of their association, two persons living together as a “family” unit were treated as a single reporting unit if they chose to be so identified. Examples of different types of reporting units are:

1. A married daughter and her husband living with her parents in the same dwelling unit constitute a single reporting unit.

2. A husband and wife and their unmarried daughter, age 18, who is living away from home while at college constitute two reporting units.
3. Three unrelated persons living in the same dwelling unit would each constitute a distinct reporting unit, three reporting units in all.

Unmarried college students less than 24 years of age who usually live in the sampled household, but were living away from home and going to school at the time of the MEPS interview, were treated as a Reporting Unit separate from that of their parents for the purpose of data collection. The variable RUSIZE13 indicates the number of persons in each RU, treating each student as a single RU separate from their parents. Thus, students are not included in the RUSIZE13 count of their parents' RU. However, for many analytic objectives, the student reporting units would be combined with their parents' reporting unit, treating the combined entity as a single family. Family identifier and size variables are described below and include students with their parents' reporting unit.

The variable FAMID13 identifies a family (i.e., persons living together related to one another by blood, marriage, adoption, foster care, or self-identified as a single unit plus related students who are living away at post-secondary school) for each round. These family identifier variables use a letter and a DU identifier to indicate a person's family affiliation. In order to identify a person's family affiliation, users must create a unique family identification variable by concatenating the DU identifier (DUID) and the FAMID13 variable, as described in Section 3.2.2.3 Instructions to Create Family Estimates.

The variable FAMSIZ13 indicates the number of persons associated with a single family unit after students are linked to their associated parent RUs for analytical purposes. Family-level analyses should use the FAMSIZ13 variables. In a few cases, students were deleted from the file because attempts to contact them were unsuccessful, and no data were collected for them. However, these persons are accounted for in the FAMSIZ13 variable.

The family size (FAMSIZ13) and the reporting unit (RU) size (RUSIZE13) counts may not be consistent with the count of records on the file. There are some reporting units where the RU size variable (RUSIZE13) is not equal to the number of people in that RU actually included on the file. This occurs because people who did not respond for their entire period of eligibility were not included on the file. In addition, for a number of these reporting units, the reference person is not included on the file for this same reason.

The variable RURSLT13 indicates the RU response status for Round 3 for the Panel 5 sample and Round 1 for the Panel 6 sample. The values include the following:

- 60 Complete with RU member
- 61 Complete with proxy--all RU members deceased on or after
1/1/2001

- 62 Complete with proxy--all RU members institutionalized or deceased on or after 1/1/2001
- 63 Complete with proxy, other

There are several other variables that characterize the reporting unit. The variable RUCLAS13 indicates the RU classification. RUs are classified for fielding purposes as 1 "Standard", 2 "New RU", or 3 "Student RU". Standard RUs are the original RUs from NHIS. A new RU is one which has been created when members of the household leave the standard RU and are followed according to the rules of the survey. A student RU is one in which an unmarried college student under 24 years of age is considered a usual member of the household but was living away from home while going to school and was treated as a Reporting Unit (RU) separate from that of their parents for the purpose of data collection.

Reference Period Dates

The reference period is the period of time for which data were collected in each round for each person. The reference period dates were determined during the interview for each person by the CAPI program.

The round-specific beginning reference period dates are included for each person. These variables include BEGRFM13, BEGRFD13, and BEGRFY13. The reference period for Panel 6 Round 1 for most persons identified at NHIS began on January 1, 2001 and ended on the date of the Round 1 interview. Persons who joined the RU after 1/1/2001 have their beginning reference date for the round as the day they joined the RU.

For Panel 5 Round 3 the reference period for most persons began on the date of the previous round's interview and ended on the date of the current round's interview. Persons who joined after the previous round's interview had their beginning reference date for the round set as the day they joined the RU. Persons who were present only for the 2000 portion of Round 3 are not included in this delivery.

The dates of the interview and the ending reference period dates are included for each person. These variables include RUENDM13, RUENDD13, RUENDY13, ENDRFM13, ENDRFD13, and ENDRFY13. In general, the date of the interview is the reference period end date for most persons. Note that the end date of the reference period is prior to the date of the interview if the person was deceased during the round, left the country, was institutionalized prior to that round's interview, or joined the military during the round and was not living with someone else who was eligible. If a person left the RU and that person was key and in-scope, the person was followed in the new RU to which he or she moved and his or her reference period dates pertain to the new RU.

Reference Person Identifiers

The variable RNDREF13 identifies the reference person for the RU. In general, the reference person is defined as the household member 16 years of age or older who owns or rents the home.

If more than one person meets this description, the household respondent identifies one from among them. If the respondent was unable to identify a person fitting this definition, the questionnaire asked for the head of household and this person was then considered the reference person for that RU. This information was collected in the reenumeration section of the CAPI questionnaire.

Respondent Identifiers

The respondent is the person who answered the interview questions for the reporting unit (RU). The round-specific variable RDRESP13 identifies the respondent. Only one respondent is identified for each RU. In instances where the interview was completed in more than one session, only the first respondent is indicated.

There are two types of respondents. The respondent can be either an RU member or a non-RU member proxy. The variable PROXY13 identifies the type of respondent.

Person Status

A number of variables describe the various components reflecting each person's status for each round of data collection. These variables provide information about a person's in-scope status, keyness status, eligibility status, and disposition status. These variables include: INSCOP13, KEYNESS, and PSTAT13. These variables are set based on sampling information and responses provided in the reenumeration section of the CAPI questionnaire.

Through the reenumeration section of the CAPI questionnaire, each member of a reporting unit was classified as "key" or "non-key", "in-scope" or "out-of-scope", and "eligible" or "ineligible" for MEPS data collection. To be included in the set of persons used in the derivation of MEPS person level estimates, a person had to be a member of the civilian non-institutionalized population for at least one day during 2001. Because a person's eligibility for the survey might have changed since the NHIS interview, a reenumeration of household membership was conducted at the start of each round's interview. Only persons who were "in-scope" sometime during 2001, "key", and responded for the full period in which they were in-scope were assigned person level weights and thus are to be used in the derivation of person level national estimates from the MEPS.

In-Scope

A person is considered as in-scope during a round if he or she is a member of the U.S. civilian, non-institutionalized population at some time during that round. The variable INSCOP13 indicates a person's in-scope status, specifically indicating whether a person was ever in-scope during the 2001 portion of the round.

Keyness

The term "keyness" is related to an individual's chance of being included in MEPS for purposes of making estimates about the U. S. civilian non-institutionalized population. A person is key if that person is linked for sampling purposes to the set of NHIS sampled households designated for inclusion in MEPS. Specifically, a key person either was a member of an NHIS household at the time of the NHIS interview, or was a family member who began living with a member of such a household after being out-of-scope prior to joining that member. (Examples of the latter situation include newborns and persons returning from military service, an institution, or living outside the United States.)

A non-key person is one whose chance of selection for the NHIS (and MEPS) was associated with a household eligible but not sampled for the NHIS, and who later became a member of a MEPS reporting unit. MEPS data (e.g., utilization and income) were collected for the period of time a non-key person was part of the sampled unit to provide information for family level analyses. However, non-key persons who leave a sample household unaccompanied by a key, in-scope member were not followed for subsequent interviews. Non-key individuals do not receive person level sample weights and thus do not contribute to person level national estimates. They may receive family level weights if they are a member of a responding family.

The variable KEYNESS indicates a person's keyness status. This variable is not round-specific. Instead, it is set at the time the person enters MEPS, and the person's keyness status never changes. Once a person is determined to be key, that person will always be key.

It should be pointed out that a person may be key even though not part of the civilian, non-institutionalized portion of the U.S. population. For example, a person in the military may have been living with his or her civilian spouse and children in a household sampled for the NHIS. The person in the military would be considered a key person for MEPS. However, such a person would not be eligible to receive a person-level sample weight if he or she was never in-scope during 2001. He or she may receive a family weight if a member of a responding family.

Eligibility

The issue of a person's eligibility for MEPS is a data collection issue. Data are to be collected only for persons considered eligible for MEPS.

All key, in-scope persons of a sampled RU are eligible for data collection. The only non-key persons eligible for data collection are those who happen to be living in an RU with at least one key, in-scope person. Their eligibility continues only for the time that they are living with at least one such person. The only out-of-scope persons eligible for data collection are those persons serving full-time on active duty in the military who were living with key in-scope persons, and again only for the time they are living with such a person.

A person may be classified as eligible for an entire round or for some part of a round. For persons who are eligible for only part of a round, data are collected for that person only for the period of time for which that person was classified as eligible.

Person Disposition Status

The variable PSTAT13 indicates a person's response and eligibility status. The PSTAT13 variable indicates the reasons for either continuing data collection for a person or terminating data collection for each person in the MEPS. Using this variable, one could identify persons who moved during the reference period, died, were born, were institutionalized or were in the military.

The following codes specify the value labels for the PSTAT13 variables. Note that some values for PSTAT13 are round-specific, as indicated in the labels.

- 11 Person in original RU, not full-time active military duty
- 12 Person in original RU, full-time active military duty, out-of-scope for whole reference period
- 13 Person is a full-time student living away from home, but associated with sampled RU
- 14 Person is full-time active military duty during round and is in-scope for part of the reference period and is in the RU at the end of the reference period
- 22 Person leaves a health care institution and rejoins the community - round 3 only
- 23 Person leaves a health care institution, goes into community and then dies - round 3 only

- 31 Person from original RU, dies during reference period
- 32 Person entered health care institution during reference period
- 33 Person entered non-health care institution during reference period
- 34 Person moved from original RU, outside US (not as student)
- 35 Person moved from original RU, to a military facility while on full-time active military duty
- 41 Person moved from the original RU, to new RU within US (new RUs include RUs originally classified as "Student RU" but which converted to "New RU")
- 42 Person joins RU and is not full-time military during round or joins RU and is in the military the entire round
- 44 Person leaves an RU and joins an existing RU and is not both in the military and coded as in-scope during the round
- 51 Person is newborn in reference period

Geographic Variables

The variable REGION13 indicates the Census region for the RU. MSA13 indicates whether or not the RU is found in a metropolitan statistical area. These variables indicate the geographic location of the reporting unit. The region variable is coded according to the Census regions, and the MSA13 variable reflects the June 30, 1993 definition of metropolitan statistical areas.

2.5.2 Demographic Variables

These variables provide information about the demographic characteristics of each person. As noted below, some variables have edited and imputed values. Values of most demographic variables on this file are obtained during each round of the MEPS interview. These variables describe data for Panel 5, Round 3 and Panel 6, Round 1, as well as a number of characteristics that are not round specific.

Sex

The variable SEX contains data on the sex of each RU member (SEX), as determined during the NHIS interview; it was verified and, if necessary, corrected during each MEPS interview. The data for new RU members (persons who were not members of the RU at the time of the NHIS interview) were also obtained during each MEPS Round. When sex of the RU member was not available from the NHIS interview and was not ascertained during one of the subsequent MEPS interviews, it was assigned in the following way. The person's first name was used to assign sex, if obvious. If the person's first name provided no indication of gender, then family relationships were reviewed. If neither of these approaches made it possible to determine the individual's sex, sex was randomly assigned.

Age

Date of birth and age for each RU member were asked or verified during each MEPS interview (DOBMM, DOBYY, AGE13X). If date of birth was available, age was calculated based on the difference between date of birth and date of interview. Inconsistencies between the calculated age and the age reported during the CAPI interview were reviewed and resolved. For purposes of confidentiality, the variable AGE13X was top coded at 90 years, and DOBYY bottom coded at 1911. When date of birth was not provided but age was (from either the MEPS or the NHIS data), the month and year of birth were assigned randomly from among the possible valid options. For any cases still not accounted for, age was imputed using (1) the mean age difference between MEPS participants with certain family relationships (where available) or (2) the mean age value for MEPS participants. For example, a mother's age is imputed as her child's age plus the mean age difference between MEPS mothers and their children, or a wife's age is imputed as the husband's age plus the mean age difference between MEPS wives and husbands.

Race, Race/Ethnicity, Hispanic Ethnicity, and Hispanic Ethnicity Group

Race (RACEX) and Hispanic ethnicity (HISPANX) were asked for each RU member during the MEPS interview. If this information was not obtained in Round 1, the questions were asked in subsequent Rounds. When race and/or ethnicity was not reported in the interview, values for these variables were obtained based on the following priority order. When available, they were obtained from the originally collected NHIS data. If not ascertained, the race, and/or ethnicity were assigned based on relationship to other members of the DU using a priority ordering that gave precedence to blood relatives in the immediate family. The variable RACETHNX indicating both race and ethnicity (e.g., with categories such as "Hispanic" and "black but not Hispanic") reflects the imputations done for RACEX and HISPANX. The specific Hispanic ethnicity group is given in the unedited variable HISPCAT.

Note: starting with Panel 5 Round 3 and Panel 6 Round 1, the questions asking about race and ethnicity were modified to allow coding of multiple races and multiple Hispanic places of origin or ancestry. If more than one race was recorded, then a follow-up question asked which race “best” represents the person’s racial background. Thus, persons new to MEPS in Panel 5 Round 3 and all persons part of Panel 6 Round 1 used the new source questions in constructing RACEX, HISPANX and HISPCAT. Those persons who participated in MEPS in Panel 5 Round 1 or 2 used the old questions and method of construction of the race and ethnicity variables.

The ranges of RACEX, HISPANX, and RACETHNX delivered in this public use file remain the same as in previous point in time data files. HISPCAT was modified to collapse persons coded with multiple sources of national origin or ancestry into the “Other Latin American/Other Spanish” category. The range for HISPCAT was expanded to include “91 Other”.

Student Status and Educational Attainment

The variable FTSTD13X indicates whether the person was a full-time student at the interview date. This variable has valid values for all persons between the ages of 17 - 23 inclusive.

The variables indicating completed years of education when first entered MEPS (EDUCYR) and highest degree when first entered MEPS (HIDEGL) were obtained from questions RE 103-105. For Panels 5 and 6 (panels from which data are based) questions RE103-105 were asked only when persons first entered MEPS, which was Round 1 for most people.

For the completed years of education variable (EDUCYR), children who are 5 years of age or older when they first entered MEPS and who never attended school were coded as 0; children under the age of 5 years were coded as -1 “Inapplicable” regardless of whether or not they attended school.

The highest degree (HIDEGL) was obtained from two questions: high school diploma (RE 104) and highest degree (RE 105). Persons under 16 years of age when they first entered MEPS were coded as 8 “Under 16 -Inapplicable”. In cases where the response to the highest degree question was “no degree” and highest grade was 13 through 17, the variable was coded as 3 “high school diploma”. If highest grade completed for those with a “no degree” response was “refused” or “don’t know”, the variable was coded as 1 “no degree”. The user should note that the EDUCYR and HIDEGL variables are unedited variables and minimal data cleaning was performed on these variables. Therefore, discrepancies in data may remain for these two sets of variables. Decisions as to how to handle these discrepancies are left to the analyst.

Marital Status and Spouse ID

Current marital status was collected and/or updated during each Round of the MEPS interview. This information was obtained in RE13 and RE97 and is reported as MARRY13X. Persons under the age of 16 were coded as 6 “under 16 - inapplicable”. In instances where there were discrepancies between the marital status of two individuals within a family, other person-level variables were reviewed to determine the edited marital status for each individual. For example, in Panel 5 Round 3, when one spouse was reported as married and the other spouse reported as widowed, the data were reviewed to determine if one partner should be coded as 8 “widowed in Round”.

Four edits were performed to ensure minimal consistency across rounds for the Panel 5 Round 3 data. First, a person could not be coded as “Never Married” after previously being coded as any other marital status (e.g. “Widowed”). Second, a person could not be coded as “Under 16 - Inapplicable” after being previously coded as any other marital status. Third, a person could not be coded as “Married in Round” after being coded as “Married” in the Round immediately preceding. Fourth, a person could not be coded as an “in Round” code (e.g., “widowed in Round”) in two subsequent Rounds.

When marital status was missing in the preceding round and provided in the current round, then the person was coded to the “in round” marital state. For example, if marital status was not available from the National Health Interview Survey, and the person’s marital status was reported as married in round 1 of MEPS, then the person would be coded as “7 married in round” for round 1 of MEPS.

The person identifier for each individual’s spouse is reported in SPOUID13. The variable is set to the PID (within each family) of the person identified as the spouse during the round. If no spouse was identified in the household, the variable was coded as 995 “no spouse in house”. Those with unknown marital status are coded as 996 “marital status unknown”. Persons under the age of 16 are coded as 997 “Less than 16 years old”.

The SPOUIN13 variable indicates whether a person’s spouse was present in the RU during the Round. If the person had no spouse in the household, the value was coded as 2. For persons under the age of 16 the value was coded as 3. The SPOUID13 and SPOUIN13 variables were obtained from RE76 and RE77, where the respondent was asked to identify how each pair of persons in the household was related. Analysts should note that this information was collected in a set of questions separate from the questions that asked about marital status. While editing was performed to ensure that SPOUID13 and SPOUIN13 are consistent within each Round, there was no consistency check between these variables and marital status in a given Round. Apparent discrepancies between marital status and spouse information may be due to any of the following causes: 1) Ambiguity as to when during a Round a change in marital status occurred. This is a result of relationship information being asked for all persons living in the household at any time during the Round, while marital status is asked as of the interview date (e.g., If one spouse died

during the reference period, the surviving spouse's marital status would be "widowed in Round", but SPOUIN13 and SPOUID13 for the same round would indicate that a spouse was present); 2)

Valid discrepancies in the case of persons who are married but not living with their spouse, or separating but still living together; or 3) Discrepancies which cannot be explained for either of the previous reasons.

Military Service and Service Era

Information on active duty military status was collected during each Round of the MEPS interview. Persons currently on full-time active duty status are identified in the variable ACTDTY13. Those under 16 years of age were coded as 3 "under 16- inapplicable" and those over the age of 59 were coded as 4 "over 59-inapplicable".

Relationship to the Reference Person within Reporting Units

For each reporting unit (RU), the person who owns or rents the dwelling unit is usually defined as the reference person. For student RUs, the student is defined as the reference person. (For additional information on reference persons, see the documentation on Reference Person Identifiers in the survey administration section.) The variable RFREL13X indicates the relationship of each individual to the reference person of the reporting unit (RU) in a given round. For the reference person, this variable has the value "self"; for all other persons in the RU, relationship to the reference person is indicated by codes representing "husband/spouse," "wife/spouse," "son," "daughter," "female partner," "male partner," etc. A code of 91, meaning "other related," was used to indicate rarely observed relationship descriptions such as "mother of partner. If the relationship of an individual to the reference person was not ascertained during the Round-specific interview, relationships between other RU members were used, where possible, to assign a relationship to the reference person. If MEPS data were not sufficient to identify the relationship of an individual to the reference person, relationship variables from the NHIS data were used to assign a relationship. In the event that a meaningful value could not be determined or data were missing, the relationship variable was assigned a missing value code.

2.5.3 Health Status Variables

Health Status variables involved the construction of person-level variables based on information collected in the Condition Enumeration and Health Status sections of the questionnaire. The majority of Health Status questions were initially asked at the family level to ascertain if anyone in the household had a particular problem or limitation. These were followed up with questions to determine which household member had each problem or limitation. Logical edits were performed in constructing the person-level variables to ensure that family-level and person-level

values were consistent. Particular attention was given to cases where missing values were reported at the family level to ensure that appropriate information was carried to the person level.

Inapplicable cases occurred when a question was never asked because of a skip patterns in the survey (e.g., individuals who were 13 years of age or older were not asked some follow-up verification questions). Inapplicable cases are coded as -1. In addition, for all variables, deceased persons were coded as inapplicable and received a code of -1.

Perceived Health Status and Mental Health Status

Perceived health status (RTHLTH13) and mental health status (MNHLTH13) were collected in the Condition Enumeration section. These questions (CE01 and CE02) asked the respondent to rate the physical and mental health each person in the family according to the following categories: excellent, very good, good, fair, and poor. No editing was done to these variables. The corresponding dichotomous variables RTPROX13 and MNPROX13 each indicate whether the ratings of physical and mental health, respectively, were provided by oneself or by someone else.

IADL and ADL Help/Supervision

The Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) Help or Supervision variable (IADLHP13) was constructed from a series of three questions. The initial question (HE01) determined if anyone in the family received help or supervision with IADLs such as using the telephone, paying bills, taking medications, preparing light meals, doing laundry, or going shopping. If the response was “yes”, a follow-up question (HE02) was asked to determine which household member received this help or supervision. For persons under age 13, a final verification question (HE03) was asked to confirm that the IADL help or supervision was the result of an impairment or physical or mental health problem. If the response to the final verification question was “no”, IADLHP13 was coded as “no” for persons under the age of 13.

If no one in the family was identified as receiving help or supervision with IADLs, all members of the family were coded as receiving no IADL help or supervision. In cases where the response to the family-level question was “don’t know”, “refused”, or otherwise missing, all persons were coded according to the family-level response. In cases where the response to the family-level question (HE01) was “yes” but no specific individuals were identified in the follow-up question as having IADL difficulties, all persons were coded as “don’t know” (-8).

The Activities of Daily Living (ADL) Help or Supervision variable (ADLHLP13) was constructed in the same manner as IADLHP13, but using questions HE04-HE06. Coding conventions for missing data were the same as for IADLHP13.

Functional Limitations

A series of questions pertained to functional limitations, defined as difficulty in performing certain specific physical actions. WLKLIM13 was the filter question. It was derived from a question (HE09) that was asked at the family level: Does anyone in the family have difficulties walking, climbing stairs, grasping objects, reaching overhead, lifting, bending or stooping, or standing for long periods of time? If the answer was no then all family members were coded as “no” (2) on WLKLIM13. If the answer was “yes”, then the specific persons who had any of these difficulties were identified and coded as “yes” (1) on WLKLIM13, and remaining family members were coded as “no”. If the response to the family-level question was “don’t know” (-8), “refused” (-7), “missing” (-9), or “inapplicable” (-1), then the corresponding missing value code was applied to each family member’s value for WLKLIM13. If the answer to HE09 was “yes”, but no specific individual was named as experiencing such difficulties, then each family member was assigned -8 for WLKLIM13. Deceased respondents were assigned a -1 code (“inapplicable”) for WLKLIM13.

If any family member was coded “yes” to WLKLIM13, a subsequent series of questions was administered. The series of questions for which WLKLIM13 served as a filter was as follows:

- LFTDIF13 - difficulty lifting 10 pounds
- STPDIF13 - difficulty walking up 10 steps
- WLKDIF13 - difficulty walking 3 blocks
- MILDIF13 - difficulty walking a mile
- STNDIF13 - difficulty standing 20 minutes
- BENDIF13 - difficulty bending or stooping
- RCHDIF13 - difficulty reaching over head
- FNGRDF13 - difficulty using fingers to grasp

The series of questions was asked separately for each person who was coded “yes” to WLKLIM13. The series of questions was not asked for other individual family members for whom WLKLIM13 was “no”. In addition, this series was not asked about family members who were less than 13 years of age, regardless of their status on WLKLIM13. These questions were not asked about deceased family members. In such cases (i.e., WLKLIM13 = 2, or age < 13, or PSTATS13 = 31), each question in the series was coded as “inapplicable” (-1). Finally, if responses to WLKLIM13 were “refused” (-7), “don’t know” (-8), “not ascertained” (-9), or otherwise inapplicable (-1), then each question in this series was coded as “inapplicable” (-1).

Analysts should note that, for WLKLIM13, there was no minimum age criterion that was used to determine a skip pattern, whereas, for the subsequent series of questions, persons less than 13 years old were skipped and coded as inapplicable. Therefore, it is possible for someone aged 12 or less to have a code of 1 (“yes”) on WLKLIM13, and also to have codes of inapplicable on the subsequent series of questions.

Use of Assistive Technology and Social/Recreational Limitations

The variables indicating use of assistive technology (AIDHLP13, from question HE07) and social/recreational limitations (SOCLIM13, from question HE22) were collected initially at the family level. If there was a “yes” response to the family-level question, a second question identified the specific individual(s) to whom the “yes” response pertained. Each individual identified as having the difficulty was coded “yes” on the appropriate variable; all remaining family members were coded “no”. If the family-level response was “don’t know”, “refused”, or otherwise missing, all persons were coded with the family-level response. In cases where the family-level response was “yes” but no specific individual was identified as having difficulty, all family members were coded as “don’t know”.

Work, Housework, and School Limitations

The variable indicating any limitation in work, housework, or school (ACTLIM13) was constructed using questions HE19-HE20. Specifically, information was collected initially at the family level. If there was a “yes” response to the family-level question (HE19), a second question (HE20) identified the specific individual(s) to whom the “yes” response pertained. Each individual identified as having a limitation was coded “yes” on ACTLIM13; all remaining family members were coded “no”. If the family-level response was “don’t know”, “refused”, or otherwise missing, all persons were coded with the family-level response. In cases where the family-level response was “yes” but no specific individual was identified as having difficulty, all family members were coded as “don’t know” (-8). Persons less than five years old were coded as “inapplicable” (-1) on ACTLIM13.

If ACTLIM13 was “yes” and the person was 5 years of age or older, a follow-up question (HE20A) was asked to identify the specific limitation or limitations for each person. These included working at a job (WRKLIM13), doing housework (HSELIM13), or going to school (SCHLIM13). Respondents could answer “yes” to each activity; one person could thus report limitation in multiple activities. WRKLIM13, HSELIM13, and SCHLIM13 have values of “yes” or “no” only if ACTLIM13 was “yes”; each variable was coded as “inapplicable” (-1) if ACTLIM13 was “no”, “refused”, or otherwise missing. When ACTLIM13 was “don’t know”, these variables were all coded as “don’t know”. If a person was under 5 years old or was deceased, WRKLIM13, HSELIM13, and SCHLIM13 were each coded as “inapplicable” (-1).

A second question (UNABLE13) asked if the person was completely unable to work at a job, do housework, or go to school. This question was asked only of the same set of respondents who provided data on WRKLIM13, HSELIM13, and SCHLIM13. Therefore, those respondents who were coded “no” on ACTLIM13, or were under 5 years of age, or were deceased, were coded as “inapplicable” (-1) on UNABLE13. UNABLE13 was asked once for whichever set of WRKLIM13, HSELIM13, and SCHLIM13 the respondent had limitations; if a respondent was

limited in more than one of these three activities, UNABLE13 did not specify if the respondent was completely unable to perform all of them, or only some of them.

Cognitive Limitations

The variable COGLIM13 was collected at the family level as a three-part question (HE24-01 to HE24-03) indicating if any of the adults in the family (1) experience confusion or memory loss, (2) have problems making decisions, or (3) require supervision for their own safety. If a “yes” response was obtained to any item, the persons affected were identified in HE25 and COGLIM13 was coded as “yes”. Remaining family members not identified were coded as “no” for COGLIM13.

If responses to HE24-01 through HE24-03 were all “no”, or if two of three were “no” and the remaining was “don’t know”, “refused”, or otherwise missing, all family members were coded as “no”. If responses to the three questions were combinations of “don’t know”, “refused”, and missing, all persons were coded as “don’t know”. If the response to any of the three questions was “yes” but no individual was identified in HE25, all persons were coded as “don’t know”.

COGLIM13 reflects whether any of the three component questions is “yes”. Respondents with one, two, or three specific cognitive limitations cannot be distinguished. In addition, because the question asked specifically about “adult” family members, all persons less than 18 years of age are coded as “inapplicable” (-1) on this question.

2.5.4 Employment Variables

Employment questions were asked of all persons 16 years and older at the time of the interview. Employment variables consist of person-level indicators such as employment status and job-related variables such as hourly wage. All job-specific variables refer to a person’s current main job. The current main job, defined by the respondent, indicates the main source of employment.

Employment variables included on the Panel 5 Round 3/Panel 6 Round 1 2001 release are: EMPST13, HRWAG13X, HRWGRD13, HRWAY13, HOUR13, HELD13X, OFFER13X, NUMEMP13 and SELFCM13. Most employment variables pertain to status as of the date of the interview.

With the exception of health insurance held or offered from a current main job, no attempt has been made to logically edit any employment variables. When missing, values were imputed for certain persons’ hourly wage; however, there was no editing performed on any values reported by the respondent. Hourly wages greater than or equal to \$57.69 were top-coded to -10. The number of employees variable was top-coded at 500.

Employment Status (EMPST13)

Employment status was asked for all persons aged 16 or older. Responses to the employment status question were: “currently employed” if the person had a job at the interview date, “has a job to return to” if the person did not work during the reference period but had a job to return to as of the interview date, “employed during the reference period” if the person had no job at the interview date but did work during 2001, and “not employed with no job to return to” if the person did not have a job at the interview date, did not work during the reference period, and did not have a job to return to. These responses are mutually exclusive. A current main job was defined for persons reporting that they were currently employed and who identified a current main job, and for persons who reported and identified a job to return to. Therefore, job-specific information such as hourly wage exists for persons not presently working at the interview date but who have a job to return to.

Hourly wage (HRWAG13X, HRWGRD13, and HRWAY13)

Hourly wage was asked of all persons who reported a current main job that was not self-employment (SELFCM13). For reasons of confidentiality, the hourly wage variable (HRWAG13X) was top-coded. A value of -10 indicates that the hourly wage was greater than or equal to \$57.69. The hourly wage on this file (HRWAG13X) should be considered along with its accompanying variables HRWGRD13 and HRWAY13. HRWGRD13 is a flag that indicates the round in which the reported hourly wage was collected. This flag is always set to “1” for people who are a part of Panel 6 because the reported hourly wage is always from Round 1 as only Round 1 information is reported on this file. People who are a part of Panel 5 can have a current main job from a previous round and HRWGRD13 indicates the round in which the wage information was collected. For Round 3 current main jobs that continue as the current main job from Round 1, HRWGRD13 is “1”. For Round 3 current main jobs that continue as the current main job from Round 2 (but not Round 1), HRWGRD13 is “2”. For Round 3 current main jobs that are identified as current main for the first time in Round 3, HRWGRD13 is “3”.

For persons who did not indicate a wage amount but who did indicate a range into which the hourly wage falls, the reported hourly wage (HRWAG13X) is the median within that range. The medians were calculated using actual wages reported from the same round by persons of the same gender reporting hourly wages within each age range category. In some cases, particularly in the low wage range, gender was not used in the calculation of the median wage in order to provide a large enough base.

HRWAY13 indicates how the corresponding HRWAG13X was constructed. Hourly wage was derived, as applicable, from a large number of source variables. In the simplest case, hourly wage

was reported directly by the respondent. For other persons, construction of the hourly wage was based upon their salary, the time period on which the salary was based, and the number of hours worked per time period. If the number of hours worked per time period was not available, a value of 40 hours per week was assumed, as identified in the HRWAY13 variable.

Health Insurance (HELD13X and OFFER13X)

There are two employment-related health insurance measures included in this release: health insurance held from a current main job (HELD13X) and health insurance offered from a current main job (OFFER13X). The held and offer variables were logically edited using health insurance information not available for public release.

Persons under age 16 as well as persons aged 16 and older who do not hold a current main job or who are self-employed with no employees are coded as “inapplicable” for both the health insurance-related employment variables.

HELD13X is “yes” if the person reports having insurance coverage from the employer or union at the current main job and that coverage provides hospital/physician or Medigap benefits (as long as the person is not self-employed with no employees). HELD13X is also “yes” if the person’s current main job is with the armed forces.

HELD13X is “no” if the person either reported that insurance is not obtained through the current main job or reported insurance and then disavowed it. To disavow insurance is to initially report it but then to deny that it is provided later in the interview, or to confirm it but indicate that it does not include hospital/physician or Medigap benefits. As noted above, this does not apply to self-employed persons with no employees (always “inapplicable”) and those with a current main job in the armed forces (always “yes”).

OFFER13X is always coded as “yes” if HELD13X is “yes”. In addition, except for certain self-employed persons with OFFER13X set to “inapplicable (see above), OFFER13X is coded as “yes” if insurance was offered through the employer or union at the job. OFFER13X is “no” when HELD13X equals “no” and insurance was not offered by the employer or union at the job.

As indicated above, information collected in the health insurance section of the interview was considered in the construction of HELD13X and OFFER13X. For example, several persons indicated in the employment section of the interview that they held health insurance through a current main job and then denied this coverage later in the health insurance section. Such people were coded as “no” for HELD13X. Due to questionnaire skip patterns, the value for HELD13X was considered in constructing the OFFER13X variable. For example, if a person responded that health insurance was held from a current main job, they were skipped past the question relating to whether health insurance was offered at that job. If the person later disavowed this insurance in

the health insurance section of the questionnaire, we would not be able to ascertain whether they were offered a policy. These individuals are coded as -9 for OFFER13X.

Hours (HOUR13)

HOUR13 is the number of hours worked per week.

Number of Employees (NUMEMP13)

Due to confidentiality concerns, the variable indicating the number of employees at the establishment (NUMEMP13) has been top coded at 500 or more employees. NUMEMP13 indicates the number of employees at the location of the person's current main job. For persons who reported a categorical size, we report a median estimated size from within the reported range.

2.5.5 Health Insurance Variables

Constructed and edited variables are provided that indicate any coverage during the MEPS Panel 6 Round 1 and Panel 5 Round 3 interviews for the sources of health insurance coverage collected during the MEPS interview. With the exception of PRIV13, the insurance variables for the Panel 6 Round 1 observations have been edited. For both the Panel 6 Round 1 sample and the Panel 5 Round 3 sample, minimal editing was performed on the Medicaid and Medicare variables to assign persons to coverage from these sources. For TRICARE coverage (TRINW13X), persons who were over age 65 had their reported TRICARE coverage overturned. As mentioned above, private insurance coverage was unedited and unimputed for Panel 6 Round 1. For Panel 5 Round 3, most of the insurance variables have been logically edited to address issues that arose during Rounds 2 and 3 when reviewing insurance reported in earlier rounds. One edit corrects for possible respondent confusion with respect to a question about covered benefits asked of respondents who reported a change in their private health insurance plan name. Additional edits were performed to address issues of missing data on the time period of coverage. Note that the Medicare and TRICARE variables indicate coverage at the time of the Panel 6 Round 1 or Panel 5 Round 3 interview dates. The private coverage and other public insurance variables indicate coverage at any time during Panel 6 Round 1 or Panel 5 Round 3.

Public sources include Medicare, TRICARE, Medicaid, and other public hospital/physician coverage. State-specific program participation in non-comprehensive coverage (STPRG13) was also identified but is not considered health insurance for the purposes of this survey.

Medicare

Medicare (MCARE13) coverage was edited (MCARE13X) for persons age 65 or over. Within this age group, individuals were assigned Medicare coverage if:

They answered yes to a follow-up question on whether or not they received Social Security benefits; or

They were covered by Medicaid, other public hospital/physician coverage or Medigap coverage; or

Their spouse was age 65 or older and covered by Medicare; or

They reported TRICARE coverage.

Medicaid and Other Public Hospital/Physician Coverage

Questions about other public hospital/physician coverage were asked in an attempt to identify Medicaid recipients who may not have recognized their coverage as Medicaid. These questions were asked only if a respondent did not report Medicaid directly. Respondents reporting other public hospital/physician coverage were asked follow-up questions to determine if their coverage was through a specific Medicaid HMO or if it included some other managed care characteristics. Respondents who identified managed care from either path were asked if they paid anything for the coverage and/or if a government source paid for the coverage.

The Medicaid variables (MCAID13) have been edited (MCAID13X) to include persons who paid nothing for their other public hospital/physician insurance when such coverage was through a Medicaid HMO or reported to include some other managed care characteristics.

To assist users in further editing sources of insurance, this file contains variables constructed from the other public hospital/physician series that measure whether:

- The respondent reported some type of managed care and paid something for the coverage, Other Public A Insurance (OTPUBA13); and
- The respondent did not report any managed care, Other Public B Insurance (OTPUBB13).

The variables OTPUBA13 and OTPUBB13 are provided only to assist in editing and should not be used to make separate insurance estimates for these types of insurance categories.

Any Public Insurance in Round 3/Round 1

The file also includes a summary measure that indicates whether or not a sample person has any public insurance during the early part of 2001 (PUB13X). Persons identified as covered by public insurance are those reporting coverage under TRICARE, Medicare, Medicaid or other public hospital/physician programs. Persons covered only by state-specific programs that did not provide comprehensive coverage (STPRG13), for example, Maryland Kidney Disease Program, were not considered to have public coverage when constructing the variable PUB13X.

Private Insurance

Variables identifying private insurance in general (PRIV13) and specific private insurance sources such as employer/union group insurance (PRIEU13); non-group insurance (PRING13); and other group insurance (PRIOG13) were constructed. Private insurance sources identify coverage in effect at any time during the early part of 2001. Separate variables identify covered persons and policyholders (policyholder variables begin with the letter "H", e.g., HPRIEU13). These variables indicate coverage or policyholder status within a source and do not distinguish between persons who are covered or policyholders on one or more policy within a given source. In some cases, the respondent was unable to characterize the source of insurance (PRIDK13). Covered persons (but not policyholders) are identified when the policyholder is living outside the RU (PRIOUT13).

An individual was considered to have private health coverage if, at a minimum, that coverage provided benefits for hospital and physician services (including Medigap coverage). Sources of insurance with missing information regarding the type of coverage were assumed to contain hospital/physician coverage. Persons without private hospital/physician insurance were not counted as privately insured.

Health insurance through a job or union (PRIEU13, PRIS13) was initially asked about in the Employment Section of the interview and later confirmed in the Health Insurance Section. Respondents also had an opportunity to report employer and union group insurance (PRIEU13) for the first time in the Health Insurance Section, but this insurance was not linked to a specific job.

All insurance reported to be through a job classified as self-employed with firm size of 1 (PRIS13) was initially reported in the Employment Section and verified in the Health Insurance Section. Unlike the other employment-related variable (PRIEU13), self-employed with firm size of 1 (PRIS13) insurance could not be reported in the Health Insurance Section for the first time. The variable PRIS13 has been constructed to allow users to determine if the insurance should be considered employment-related.

Private insurance that was not employment-related (PRING13, PRIOG13, PRIDK13, and PRIOUT13) was reported in the Health Insurance Section only.

Any Insurance in Round 3 / Round 1

The file also includes a summary measure that indicates whether or not a sample person has any insurance during the early part of 2001 (INSRD13X). Persons identified as insured are those reporting coverage under TRICARE, Medicare, Medicaid or other public hospital/physician or private hospital/physician insurance (including Medigap plans). A person is considered uninsured if not covered by one of these insurance sources.

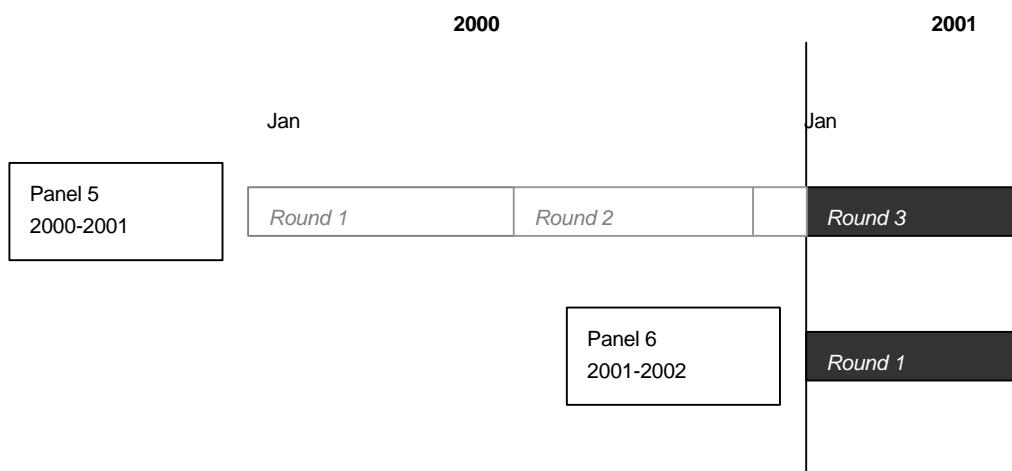
Persons covered only by state-specific programs that provide non-comprehensive coverage (STPRG13), for example, Maryland Kidney Disease Program, and those without hospital/physician benefits (for example, private insurance for dental or vision care only, accidents or specific diseases) were not considered to have public coverage when constructing the variable INSRD13X.

3.0 Survey Sample Information

3.1 Sample Design and Response Rates

The MEPS is designed to produce estimates at the national and regional level over time for the civilian non-institutionalized population of the United States and some subpopulations of interest.

Data are collected for each MEPS panel to cover a two-year period. MEPS Panel 5 spans the two calendar years 2000 and 2001 while MEPS Panel 6 spans 2001 and 2002. As described previously, this file consists of the subset of data from the fifth and sixth MEPS panels covering approximately the first half of calendar year 2001. More specifically, data from the 2001 portion of the third round of data collection for the MEPS Panel 5 sample are pooled with data from the first round of data collection for the MEPS Panel 6 sample (illustrated below).



3.1.1 Panel 5

For MEPS Panel 5, 5,357 households were fielded in 2000, a nationally representative subsample of the households responding to the 1999 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). Similar to the earlier MEPS panels, the Panel 5 sample reflects the oversampling of Hispanics and Black households resulting from the NHIS sample design. Hispanic households were oversampled at a rate of roughly 2 to 1, while the oversampling rate for Black households was roughly 1.5 to 1.

The overall MEPS Panel 5 response rate at the end of round 3 (when data were collected for the first part of 2001) was 68.3 percent. This overall rate reflects response to both the 1999 NHIS interview and the MEPS interviews for rounds 1-3.

3.1.2 Panel 6

For MEPS Panel 6, 10,651 households were fielded in 2001, a nationally representative subsample of the households responding to the 2000 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). As described above for all previous MEPS samples, the Panel 6 sample reflects the oversampling of Hispanics and Black households for the NHIS.

The overall MEPS Panel 6 response rate at the end of round 1 (which collects data for the first part of 2001) was 72.9 percent. This overall rate reflects response to the 2000 NHIS interview and the MEPS round 1 interview.

3.1.3 Combined Panel Response

A pooled response rate for the survey respondents in this data set is obtained by taking a weighted average of the panel specific response rates. The Panel 6 response rate was weighted by a factor of 2/3 while that of Panel 5 by a factor of 1/3, reflecting the relative sample sizes of the two panels. The resulting pooled response rate for the combined panels is 71.4 percent.

3.2 Sample Weights

The sample weights provided in this file can be used to produce estimates for the U.S. civilian, non-institutionalized population and subgroups of this population based on the sample data. Two weights are provided: a person level weight and a family level weight.

3.2.1 Person Level Weight

The person level weight variable (WGTSP13) was constructed as a composite of separate panel specific weights. A positive person level weight was assigned to all key members of the U.S. civilian non-institutionalized population for whom MEPS data were collected, representing the corresponding U.S. population in early 2001. For the Panel 6, Round 1 participants this weight reflects the original household probability of selection for the NHIS, ratio-adjustment to NHIS national population estimates at the household level, adjustment for non-participation in MEPS at the household level, and poststratification to figures obtained from March 2001 Current Population Survey (CPS) data at the family and person levels. The person level poststratification reflected population distributions across census region, MSA status, race/ethnicity (Hispanic, black/non-Hispanic, other), sex, and age.

Overall, the weighted population estimate based on WGTSP13 for the civilian noninstitutionalized population is 275,740,015. Estimates can be made for this population based on the 34,173 sample persons in the file with positive weights (WGTSP13>0).

3.2.2 Family Level Weight

3.2.2.1 Definition of MEPS Families

A family unit is defined in MEPS as two or more persons living together in the same household during the reference period (in this data set, from January 1, 2001 to the date of interview) who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption (including foster children). In addition, unrelated persons who identify themselves as a family (e.g. domestic partners) are also defined as a MEPS family unit. Persons who died during the round 1 reference period and those who left the civilian non-institutionalized population part way through the reference period due to institutionalization, emigration, or enrollment in the military were considered to be family members. Relatives identified as usual residents of the household but who were not present at the time of the interview, such as college students living away from their parents' home during the school year, were considered as members of the family that identified them.

3.2.2.2 Assignment of Weights

If all key in-scope members of a family responded to MEPS for their entire period of eligibility in 2001 Panel 5 Round 3, or for Panel 6 Round 1, and the family had a key reference person, then that family received a family level weight (WGTRU13>0). Reporting units consisting of an individual respondent who was both key and in-scope also received a family level weight. These

individual person units can be included or excluded from family level analyses at the analyst's discretion.

Family level weights were poststratified to figures obtained from the March 2001 CPS. The family level poststratification reflected population distributions across family type (reference person married, spouse present; male reference person, no spouse present; female reference person, no spouse present), size of family, age of reference person, location of family (census region and MSA status), and race/ethnicity of the family's reference person. The weighted estimate of the number of units (families plus individual person units) with family level weights containing at least one member of the U.S. civilian non-institutionalized population is 118,594,062 based on 13,393 families with WGTRU13>0.

It should be noted that CPS and MEPS definitions of family units are slightly different. In particular, CPS does not include foster children in families or consider unmarried persons who live together as family units. Adjustments were made in the poststratification process to help compensate for some of these differences.

3.2.2.3 Instructions to Create Family Estimates

To make estimates at the family level, it is necessary to prepare a family level file containing one record per family. Each MEPS family unit is uniquely identified by the combination of the variables DUID and FAMID13. Only persons with positive nonzero family weight values (WGTRU13>0) are candidates for inclusion in family estimates. Following is a summary of steps that can be used for family level estimation.

1. Concatenate the variables DUID and FAMID13 into a new variable (e.g. DUFAM13).
2. To create a family level file, sort by DUFAM13 and then subset to one record per DUFAM13 value by retaining only the reference person record (RNDREF13=1) for each value of DUFAM13. If the analyst chooses to eliminate single person units from family analyses, it is also necessary to exclude records where FAMSIZ13=1. If aggregate measures for families are needed for analytic purposes (e.g. means or totals), then those measures need to be computed using person-level information within families and attached to the family record. For other types of variables, analysts frequently use characteristics of the reference person to represent family characteristics.
3. Apply the weight WGTRU13 to the analytic variable(s) of interest to obtain national family estimates.

3.2.3 Relationship Between Person and Family Level Weights

Some persons with positive person level weights do not have family level weights because at least one member of their family was a non-participant in MEPS. Others with positive person weights did not receive a family weight because the family reference person was not key. In addition, some persons with positive family level weights do not have person level weights because they were either non-key or a member of the military or otherwise out-of-scope during the first half of 2001. Analysts should include only persons with positive person level weights for person level analyses and persons with positive family level weights for family level analyses.

3.3 Variance Estimation

To obtain estimates of variability (such as the standard error of sample estimates or corresponding confidence intervals) for estimates based on MEPS survey data, one needs to take into account the complex sample design of MEPS for both person and family level analyses. Various approaches can be used to develop such estimates of variance including a Taylor series method for variance estimation or various replication methodologies. Replicate weights have not been developed for the MEPS data. We will describe the variables needed to implement a Taylor series estimation approach.

Using a Taylor Series approach, variance estimation strata and the variance estimation PSUs within these strata must be specified. The variables VARST13 and PSU13 on this MEPS data file (updated versions of corresponding variables provided in previously released MEPS public use files) serve to identify the sampling strata and primary sampling units required by the variance estimation programs. Specifying a “with replacement” design in a computer software package such as SUDAAN should provide estimated standard errors appropriate for assessing the variability of MEPS survey estimates. It should be noted that the number of degrees of freedom associated with estimates of variability indicated by such a package may not appropriately reflect the number available. For variables of interest distributed throughout the country (and thus the MEPS sample PSUs), one can generally expect to have at least 100 degrees of freedom associated with the estimated standard errors for national estimates based on this MEPS database.

D. VARIABLE-SOURCE CROSSWALK

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION VARIABLES

VARIABLE	LABEL	SOURCE
DUID	DU ID	Assigned in Sampling
PID	Person Number	Assigned in Sampling or by CAPI
DUPERSID	Person ID (DUID+PID)	Assigned in Sampling
PANEL13	Panel Number	Assigned by CAPI
FAMID13	Family Identifier (Student Merged In)	CAPI Derived
RULETR13	RU Letter	CAPI Derived
RUSIZE13	RU Size	CAPI Derived
RUCLAS13	RU Fielded As: Standard, New, Student	CAPI Derived
FAMSIZ13	RU Size Including Students	CAPI Derived
REGION13	Census Region	Assigned in Sampling
MSA13	MSA	Assigned in Sampling
RNDREF13	Reference Person	RE 42-45
RDRESP13	1st Respondent Indicator	RE 6, 8
PROXY13	Was Respondent A Proxy	RE 2
BEGRFD13	Reference Period Begin Date: Day	CAPI Derived
BEGRFM13	Reference Period Begin Date: Month	CAPI Derived
BEGRFY13	Reference Period Begin Date: Year	CAPI Derived
ENDRFD13	Reference Period End Date: Day	CAPI Derived
ENDRFM13	Reference Period End Date: Month	CAPI Derived
ENDRFY13	Reference Period End Date: Year	CAPI Derived
KEYNESS	Person Key Status	RE Section
INSCOP13	In-scope	RE Section
PSTAT13	Person Disposition Status	RE Section
RURSLT13	RU Result	Assigned by CAPI
RUENDD13	Date of Intv (Date Started: Day)	Assigned by CAPI
RUENDM13	Date of Intv (Date Started: Month)	Assigned by CAPI
RUENDY13	Date of Intv (Date Started: Year)	Assigned by CAPI

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

VARIABLE	LABEL	SOURCE
AGE13X	Age - (Edited/Imputed)	RE 12, 57-66
DOBMM	Date of Birth: Month	RE 12, 57-66
DOBYY	Date of Birth: Year	RE 12, 57-66
SEX	Sex	RE 12, 57, 61
RACE13X	Race - (Edited/Imputed)	RE 101, 102
RACETHNX	Race/Ethnicity - (Edited/Imputed)	RE 98-102
HISPANX	Hispanic Ethnicity - (Edited/Imputed)	RE 98-100
HISPCAT	Specific Hispanic Ethnicity Group	RE 98-100
MARRY13X	Marital Status - (Edited/Imputed)	RE 13, 97
SPOUID13	Spouse ID	RE 13, 97
SPOUIN13	Marital Status W/ Spouse Present	RE 13, 97
EDUCYR	Years of Educ when First Entered MEPS	RE 103-105
HIDEGL	Highest Degree when First Entered MEPS	RE 103-105
FTSTD13X	Student Status Ages 17-23 (Edit/Imputed)	RE 11A, 106-108
ACTDTY13	Military Full-Time Active Duty	RE14, 96
RFREL13X	Relation To Ref Pers (Edited/Imputed)	RE 76-77

HEALTH STATUS VARIABLES

VARIABLE	LABEL	SOURCE
RTHLTH13	Perceived Health Status	CE 1
RTPROX13	Self/Proxy Rating of Health	CE 1
MNHLTH13	Perceived Mental Health Status	CE 2
MNPROX13	Self/Proxy Rating of Mental Health	CE 2
IADLHP13	IADL Screener	HE 2,3
ADLHLP13	ADL Screener	HE 5,6
AIDHLP13	Uses Assistive Devices	HE 7,8
WLKLIM13	Limitation in Physical Functioning	HE 9,10
LFTDIF13	Difficulty Lifting 10 Pounds	HE 11
STPDIF13	Difficulty Walking Up 10 Steps	HE 12
WLKDIF13	Difficulty Walking 3 Blocks	HE 13
MILDIF13	Difficulty Walking a Mile	HE 14
STNDIF13	Difficulty Standing 20 Minutes	HE 15
BENDIF13	Difficulty Bending/Stooping	HE 16
RCHDIF13	Difficulty Reaching Over Head	HE 17
FNGRDF13	Difficulty Using Fingers to Grasp	HE 18
ACTLIM13	Limitation Work/Housework/School	HE 19,20
WRKLIM13	Work Limitation	HE 19,20
HSELIM13	Housework Limitation	HE 19,20
SCHLIM13	School Limitation	HE 19,20
UNABLE13	Completely Unable To Do Activity	HE 21
SOCLIM13	Social Limitation	HE 22,23
COGLIM13	Cognitive Limitation	HE 24,25

EMPLOYMENT VARIABLES

VARIABLE	LABEL	SOURCE
EMPST13	Employment Status	EM 1-3; RJ 1, 6
HRWAG13X	Hourly Wage at Current Main Job	EW section; EM 104-105, 111
HRWGRD13	Hourly Wage Round Flag	Constructed
HRWAY13	Calculation Methods for Hourly Wage	EM 104-105, 111; EW section
HOUR13	Hours Worked Per Week at CMJ	EM 104-105, 111; EW 17; RJ 1
HELD13X	Health Insurance Held From CMJ	EM, HX, RJ and HP sections
OFFER13X	Health Insurance Offered at CMJ	EM, HX, RJ and HP sections
NUMEMP13	Number of Employees at Location of CMJ	EM 91-92, 124; RJ 8
SELFCM13	Self-Employed at Current Main Job	EM 5, 11, 18, 27, 40, 53

HEALTH INSURANCE VARIABLES

VARIABLE	LABEL	SOURCE
TRINW13X	PID Cov By TRICARE at Int Date - Edited	HX 12, 13; PR 19 - 22; HQ section; AGE13X; RE 14, 96A
MCARE13	PID Cov By Medicare	HX 5 - 7
MCARE13X	PID Cov By Medicare	HX 5 - 7, 10 - 15; PRIV13 and (HX 48 or (OE 10, 24, 37)); PR 7-10, 19-26
MCAID13	PID Cov By Medicaid	HX 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19; HQ section; PR 7-10, 23-26, 39-42
MCAID13X	PID Cov By Medicaid - Edited	MCAID13, HX 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19; 41-43, 45; HQ section; PR 7-10, 11-14, 23-32, 39-42
OTPUBA13	PID Cov By/Pays Other Gov Medicaid HMO	HX 14, 15, 41-45; HQ section; PR 23-30
OTPUBB13	PID Cov By Other Public not Medicaid HMO	HX 14, 15, 41-43; HQ section; PR 23-30
STPRG13	PID Cov By State Specific Program	HX 16-19; HQ section; PR 35-38
PUB13X	PID Cov By Public Insurance - Edited	TRINW13X, MCARE13X, MCAID13X, OTPUBA13, OTPUBB13

VARIABLE	LABEL	SOURCE
PRIEU13	PID Cov By Private Employment/Union Plan	HX 2-4, 21-24 48; HP, OE, HQ , EM, and RJ sections
PRIDK13	PID Cov By Private DK Plan	HX 21-24 48; HP, OE, and HQ sections
PRING13	PID Cov By NonGroup Plan	HX 21-24 48; HP, OE, and HQ sections
PRIOG13	PID Cov By Other Group Plan	HX 21-24 48; HP, OE, and HQ sections
PRIS13	PID Cov By Self-Employed Firm Size 1 Insurance	HX 3, 4, 48; EM, RJ, OE, and HQ sections
PRIOUT13	PID Cov By Holder Outside RU	HX 21-24 48; HP, OE, and HQ sections
PRIV13	PID Cov By Private Ins	PRIEU13, PRIDK13, PRING13, PRIOG13, PRIS13, PRIOUT13
HPRIEU13	PID is Holder of Private Employment/Union Plan	HX 2-4, 9, 11, 21-24 48; HP, OE, HQ , EM, and RJ sections
HPRIDK13	PID is Holder of Private DK Plan	HX 11, 21-24 48; HP, OE, and HQ sections
HPRING13	PID is Holder of NonGroup Plan	HX 11, 21-24 48; HP, OE, and HQ sections
HPRIOG13	PID is Holder of Other Group Plan	HX 11, 21-24 48; HP, OE, and HQ sections
HPRIS13	PID is Holder of Self-Employed Firm Size 1 Insurance	HX 3, 4, 9, 48; EM, RJ, OE, and HQ sections

VARIABLE	LABEL	SOURCE
HPRIV13	PID is Holder of Private Ins	HPRIEU13, HPRIDK13, HPRING13, HPRIOG13, HPRIS13
INSRD13X	PID is Insured - Edited	PUB13X, PRIV13

WEIGHTS

VARIABLE	LABEL	SOURCE
WGTSP13	Person Weight	Constructed
WGTRU13	Family Weight	Constructed
VARST13	Variance Estimation Stratum	Constructed
PSU13	Variance Estimation PSU	Constructed