

User Memorandum 004

To: MCBS Users
From: Debra Reed-Gillette
Director, Division of Survey Management and Analysis
Subject: **Call for Comments – Health Status and Functioning**
Date: October 28, 2014
CC: Project Files

The Division of Survey Management and Analysis (DSMA) invites individuals, groups, and professional communities to submit comments on the Health Status and Functioning (HSF) section of the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS). DSMA is specifically seeking comment on which HSF items can be added, dropped, or modified to ensure that the MCBS is utilizing state-of-the-art measures of health status and functioning. For proposed items, submissions that include how the items are currently used (e.g., other national surveys), any available documentation of their psychometric properties, and a description of how their inclusion in the MCBS would benefit Medicare, its beneficiaries, and the larger research community will be given special consideration. For suggested dropped or modified items, submissions that provide a sound rationale on how the change would benefit Medicare, its beneficiaries, and the larger research community will also be given special consideration.

Background on the MCBS and the HSF Section

The MCBS is an in-person, longitudinal panel survey of 15,500 Medicare beneficiaries. The MCBS sample represents the total Medicare population, whether aged or disabled, living in the community or a facility, or served by managed care or traditional fee-for-service. Beneficiaries are interviewed three times a year over a period of four years to form a continuous profile of their health care experience. The survey is administered by field interviewers using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) and, when needed, show cards. Field interviewers are trained to administer the CAPI survey but are not trained medical staff. Two types of interviews are conducted in the MCBS: a community interview done in the home and a facility interview of knowledgeable staff on behalf of institutionalized beneficiaries. The interview is conducted in either setting, depending on the location of the beneficiary at the time of interview.

Separate HSF questionnaires are administered to community and facility beneficiaries. The community instrument asks about a wide variety of health topics, including general health, vision, hearing, height, weight, preventive care, smoking, alcohol use, exercise, select medical conditions, health screenings, functional limitations, helper characteristics, and falls. The facility instrument collects many items from beneficiary minimum dataset (MDS) assessments. On average, the HSF section takes 26 minutes to complete for new survey participants and 19 minutes for continuing participants. It is administered once a year in the fall round.

How to Comment or Request a Copy of the MCBS HSF Questionnaire

Individuals, groups, and professional communities interested in commenting on this topic may email their comments to mcbs@cms.hhs.gov or send a letter to the following address: HSF Public Commentary, Medicare

Current Beneficiary Survey, 7500 Security Boulevard (MS B2-29-04), Baltimore, MD 21244. Only comments received on or before **November 30, 2014** will be considered.

The 2013 MCBS HSF community and facility questionnaires are available online at <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Research/MCBS/Questionnaires.html>. To access the 2013 HSF questionnaire, click "2013 Questionnaires," and download the zip file available under the "Downloads" heading. Within the zip file, the file named "C_R67_Health_Status_and_Functioning_HFQ.pdf" contains the community CAPI specification, and the file named "F_R67_Health_Status_HSF.pdf" contains the facility CAPI specification.