EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HCUP – PROJECT OVERVIEW 2012

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Purpose

This Project Overview binder is intended to provide a user-friendly, definitive source of information regarding all aspects of the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP, pronounced "H-Cup") during 2012. HCUP would not be possible without the voluntary cooperation of State data organizations, hospital associations, and private data organizations – known as "HCUP Partners" – that provide data to the project for research and public health use. This binder provides HCUP Partners with an annual update on project developments and serves as a guide for exploring the latest resources available to HCUP Partners. The Project Overview binder is also a useful introduction for potential Partners, providing an overall description of the project, as well as information on HCUP participation and benefits.

Background

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) sponsors HCUP, a Federal-State-Industry partnership established to develop and maintain a family of longitudinal health care databases, related tools, products, and technical support services. The HCUP databases integrate data collected by State data organizations, hospital associations, and private data organizations into a national resource of hospital, ambulatory surgery, and emergency department data. HCUP databases are used to support health services research and policy analyses on issues such as costs, utilization and access to care, quality of care, medical practice patterns, and medical treatment effectiveness.

HCUP is directed and funded by AHRQ. Development and analysis of the HCUP databases are accomplished by AHRQ through its primary contractor, Thomson Reuters, Inc., and several key subcontractors, including the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP), the American Institutes for Research (AIR), Social and Scientific Systems (SSS), and M.L. Barrett, Inc. As of March 2012, 46 HCUP Partners contributed to the creation of the 2010 databases.

Project Goals

In support of AHRQ's mission, the goals of HCUP are to:

1. Create and enhance a powerful source of national and State all-payer health care data.

2. Produce a broad set of software tools and products to facilitate the use of HCUP and other administrative data.

3. Enrich a collaborative partnership with statewide data organizations aimed at increasing the quality and use of health care data.

4. Conduct and translate research to inform decision making and improve health care delivery.

For additional information, please contact either of the following individuals:

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