



**H·CUP**  
HEALTHCARE COST AND UTILIZATION PROJECT

## BENEFITS OF HCUP PARTNERSHIP

2012



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Participation in HCUP represents a unique opportunity to contribute to a national database built from State-level data. HCUP offers data organizations a voice at the Federal level and provides a forum for organizations to exchange ideas and help shape the AHRQ research agenda. In addition, HCUP returns complimentary copies of the HCUP databases to participating data organizations, creates diverse tools and data products, and provides Partner-exclusive technical support, software tools, and reports to help enhance the value of Partner organizations' data.

### **1. Contribution to a National Database Project**

Through participation in HCUP, data organizations help to increase the visibility of their data and further demonstrate the value of the data beyond the uses within the organization. HCUP contributes to important research that is published regularly in clinical and scientific health services research journals. HCUP would not be possible without the cooperative efforts of its Partners.

### **2. Formatted Research Databases**

AHRQ returns copies of its uniformly formatted, State-specific inpatient (SID), ambulatory surgery (SASD), and emergency department (SEDD) databases to contributing HCUP Partners. In addition, AHRQ provides HCUP Partners with complimentary copies of the Nationwide Inpatient Sample (NIS), Kids' Inpatient Sample (KID), and Nationwide Emergency Department Sample (NEDS) upon receipt of a signed Data Use Agreement (DUA).

### **3. Participation in the HCUP Central Distributor**

The HCUP Central Distributor is maintained by AHRQ, on behalf of participating HCUP Partner organizations, to distribute restricted access public release versions of HCUP data. Partners may choose to make the HCUP versions of their SID, SASD, and SEDD available to qualified researchers through the Central Distributor. Participation in the release of HCUP State databases is voluntary; HCUP Partners participate at no cost to their organizations. Each participating Partner organization determines the content and price of the public release version of its SID, SASD, and SEDD files. AHRQ also restricts certain content to meet its confidentiality requirements.

### **4. Networking Opportunities**

- **Annual HCUP Partners Meeting**

Each year Partners are invited to the annual HCUP Partners Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a forum for AHRQ and the HCUP Partners to inform each other of the challenges and accomplishments of the past year, as well as to help set priorities for the coming year. Partners are invited to help plan the meeting agenda and to participate in panels and presentations at the meeting. This meeting provides the opportunity for all Partners to share their perspectives on the data needs of the future in a Federal-State dialogue. Travel and accommodation expenses for one representative from each organization are paid by AHRQ.

- **Workgroups**  
HCUP Partners have the opportunity to participate in workgroups that help to inform the Project, strengthen the partnership, and support the goals of Partner organizations. These workgroups may address topics in specific areas of interest to Partners and AHRQ, may be focused on specific products being developed for Partners, or may provide support in priority areas. Workgroups are formed on an as-needed basis and all Partner organizations are invited to participate.

## 5. Technical Support

- **Software Tools**  
AHRQ develops various software tools that are available for use with HCUP and other administrative data to improve the ease of use and value of the databases. AHRQ currently maintains several software tools, including Mental Health and Substance Abuse Clinical Classification Software (CCS-MHSA), Chronic Condition Indicators (CCI), The Clinical Classifications Software (CCS) for ICD-10, and Utilization Flags that may be applied to hospital administrative data to enhance analyses. Software tools are free of charge and most are available for download from the HCUP-US Website at [http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/tools\\_software.jsp](http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/tools_software.jsp). In addition to the publicly available tools, AHRQ also develops tools and reports for the exclusive use of HCUP Partners. These products must be accessed through the secure, password-protected HCUP-US Partners Page (<http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/login.jsp>) to login and gain access to these documents.
- **MONAHRQ**  
MONAHRQ (My Own Network, Powered by AHRQ) is a desktop software tool that AHRQ developed to enable data organizations – such as State and local data organizations, regional reporting collaborative, hospitals, health plans, and providers – to input their own data and quickly generate a health care reporting Website ready for use by consumers, policymakers, or other decisionmakers. The site can provide information on hospital quality, hospital utilization and costs, local rates of procedures and conditions, and preventable hospitalizations in local areas. For more information about MONAHRQ, please visit the MONAHRQ User Support Website at <http://monahrq.ahrq.gov/>.
- **Analytic and Methods Reports**  
AHRQ produces analytic and methods reports from HCUP data. Analytic reports on health care topics are an important means of communicating findings about health care quality, safety, effectiveness and efficiency. Recent reports include data assessments such as comparative HCUP State Data Reports, and Race Data Quality reports for each State, and topical reports such as Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders reports. The reports also include technical analyses that often become Methods Series Reports. In 2011, the following Methods Series Reports were released:
  - Methodological Issues when Studying Readmissions and Revisits using Hospital Administrative Data
  - Evaluation of the State Ambulatory Surgery Databases, Available through the HCUP Central Distributor, 2008
  - Special Study on the Meaning of the First-Listed Diagnosis on Emergency Department and Ambulatory Surgery Records
  - Tools for More Accurate Inpatient Cost Estimates with HCUP Databases, 2009

- The Case for the Present-on-Admission (POA) Indicator: Update 2011 Methods Report
  - Methods Applying AHRQ Quality Indicators to Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP) Data for the Ninth (2011) NHQR and NHDR Report
  - Evaluation of the State Ambulatory Surgery Databases, Available through the HCUP Central Distributor, 2009
- **Subject Matter Expertise**  
AHRQ and Thomson Reuters HCUP staff provide subject matter expertise on data use issues. HCUP team members provide analytic guidance to assist in the interpretation or use of administrative data and serve as collaborators to explore specific questions. These collaborations have explored issues regarding race and ethnicity, mental health, emergency department utilization, patient State of residence (border crossing) tables, methodologies for identifying readmissions across time and hospital settings, methodologies for converting charges to cost data, and market variables.
- **HCUP-US Partners Page**  
The HCUP-US Website Partners Page is a secure, password-protected area that contains information and documents of specific interest to data organizations participating in HCUP. The section was designed specifically for HCUP Partners. It provides a user-friendly platform for Partners to stay informed of current activities involving HCUP, to easily access HCUP information and documents, including the HCUP Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), HCUP Data Security Plan, Data Elements requested by HCUP, and other related documents. A username and password are required to access the secure HCUP-US Partner Page. To login, go to <http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/login.jsp>.