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Questions and Answers from SHADAC Conference Call Community Tracking Study Household Survey and Physician Survey

**Featuring Elizabeth Schaefer
Center for Studying Health System Change
Wednesday, March 10, 2004, 12:00 –1:30pm CST**

Q: Using CTS physician survey data, is it possible to compare one state to another?

A: No, the sample for the survey was not drawn this way. If a state has its own physician survey data, it would be possible to compare this with national CTS estimates. Or, a state may wish to compare a high-intensity CTS survey site within its borders to national estimates or to other like sites from other places in the country.

Q: Is it possible to use CTS household survey data to examine the use of therapy services such as physical therapy and occupational therapy for people with chronic conditions?

A: No. Service utilization data is available for hospital stays, emergency room visits, physician office visits, non-physician office visits (with nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and midwives only), surgeries, and visits to mental health professionals. Therefore, physical therapy and occupational therapy are not specifically identified in the data.

Q: Are CTS survey findings for particular sites disseminated to local governments and public health departments?

A: Not as a matter of course. However, if the Center for Studying Health System Change (HSC) conducts site visits in the area, materials are distributed to all interviewees, a group that always includes some public officials.

Q: Are rural/urban comparisons possible using the CTS physician survey data?

A: Yes. You would need to obtain the restricted use file in order to compare physicians in urban and rural areas, because the public use file doesn't contain any geographic identifiers. Weighting the data is necessary, as it is for any CTS analysis. The user's guides explain which sample and weight to use for different types of analyses.

Q: What breakouts for insurance coverage status are available from the CTS household survey?

A: Private coverage (both employer-sponsored and individually purchased), Medicaid (excluding SCHIP), Medicare, military, other public insurance (IHS; SCHIP and other state-specific programs), and other.

Q: Can one use CTS survey data to make comparisons between a territory (like the US Virgin Islands) and other like regions on the mainland?

A: Yes. The CTS surveys are representative of the household and physician populations in the 48 contiguous states. Since the Virgin Islands has its own survey estimates, one can compare these estimates with CTS survey estimates for individuals (or physicians) in a particular geographic area (e.g., south-central US) or in particular types of geographic areas (e.g., in states or sites with low uninsurance rates).