

March 2000 edition of SF 278 report forms are provided for completion. In addition, information regarding these changes is being posted on OGE's Web site.

Effective January 1, 2002, GSA raised "minimal value" under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act, 5 U.S.C. 7342, to \$285 or less for the three-year period 2002–2004. See 67 FR 56495–56496 (September 4, 2002). As a result, OGE has advised agencies and revised its financial disclosure regulations to reflect the increase in the thresholds for SF 278 reporting of gifts and travel reimbursements received from any one source to "more than \$285" for the aggregation level for reporting and to "\$114 or less" for the de minimis aggregation exception threshold. These Ethics Act reporting thresholds are tied to any adjustment in foreign gifts minimal value over \$250 (see 5 U.S.C. app. section 102(a)(2)(A) & (B)). See OGE's September 27, 2002 memorandum to designated agency ethics officials (DO–02–021) and 67 FR 61761–61762 (October 2, 2002). Both the GSA and OGE rulemakings and OGE's memorandum are posted on the OGE Web site.

In addition, OGE is in the process of updating the OGE/GOVT–1 system of records notice (covering SF 278 Public Financial Disclosure Reports and other name-retrieved ethics program records). As a result, the Privacy Act Statement, which includes paraphrases of the routine uses on page 11 of the instructions on the SF 278, will be affected. A summary of the anticipated changes relevant to that SF 278 statement has been prepared for inclusion with the paperwork clearance submission to OMB. Once the new language in OGE's forthcoming Privacy Act notice is finalized (anticipated completion date is spring 2003), OGE will advise departments and agencies of the Privacy Act Statement changes (with notice to OMB at that time) without further paperwork clearance.

During the last session of Congress, a bill (S. 1811) was introduced to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. app.) to streamline the financial disclosure process for executive branch employees. The bill was not enacted, but may be introduced again in the current session of Congress. If the bill is enacted, the public financial disclosure requirements will change, and the SF 278 will have to be revised accordingly. At that time, OGE would seek paperwork renewal from OMB and standard form clearance from GSA for the revised SF 278.

For now, OGE will continue to make the unmodified SF 278 available to

departments and agencies and their reporting employees through the Forms, Publications & Other Ethics Documents section of OGE's Web site. This allows employees two different fillable options for preparing their report on a computer (in addition to a downloadable blank form), although a printout and manual signature of the form are still required unless specifically approved otherwise by OGE.

The SF 278 is completed by candidates, nominees, new entrants, incumbents and terminees of certain high-level positions in the executive branch of the Federal Government. The Office of Government Ethics, along with the agencies concerned, conducts the review of the SF 278 reports of Presidential nominees subject to Senate confirmation. This group of nominee reports forms, together with those of terminees from such positions who may file after leaving the Government, forms the basis for OGE's paperwork estimates in this notice.

In light of OGE's experience over the past three years (1999–2001), the estimate of the total number, on average, of such nominees' SF 278 forms expected to be filed annually at OGE by members of the public (as opposed to current Federal employees) is 449. (The 2002 figures are not yet available.) This estimated number is based primarily on the forms processed at OGE by private citizen Presidential nominees to positions subject to Senate confirmation (and their private representatives—lawyers, accountants, brokers and bankers) and those who file termination reports from such positions after their Government service ends, as well as Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates who are private citizens. The OGE estimate covers the next three years, 2003–2005 including a significant increase in reports anticipated with the fall 2004 Presidential election and following transition. The prior paperwork burden estimate was 260 forms per year. The estimated average amount of time to complete the report form, including review of the instructions and gathering of needed information, remains the same at three hours. Thus, the overall estimated annual public burden for the SF 278 for the private citizen/representative nominee and terminnee report forms processed at the Office of Government Ethics is being adjusted to 1,347 (from 780) hours.

Moreover, OGE estimates, based on the agency ethics program questionnaire responses for 1999–2001 (the 2002 figures are not available), that some 21,200 SF 278 report forms are filed annually at departments and agencies

throughout the executive branch. Most of those executive branch filers are current Federal employees at the time they file, but certain candidates for President and Vice President, nominees, new entrants and terminees complete the form either before or after their Government service. The percentage of private citizen filers branchwide is estimated at no more than 5% to 10%, or some 1,060 to 2,120 per year at most.

Public comment is invited on each aspect of the SF 278 Public Financial Disclosure Report as set forth in this notice, including specifically views on the need for and practical utility of this collection of information, the accuracy of OGE's burden estimate, the potential for enhancement of quality, utility and clarity of the information collected, and the minimization of burden (including the use of information technology).

Any comments received in response to this notice will be summarized for, and may be included with, OGE's request for extension of OMB paperwork approval for this information collection. Comments will also become a matter of public record.

Approved: December 30, 2002.

**Amy L. Comstock,**

*Director, Office of Government Ethics.*

[FR Doc. 03–287 Filed 1–6–03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 6345–02–P**

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

### **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality**

#### **Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request**

**AGENCY:** Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, HHS.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces the intention of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to request the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to allow the proposed information collection project: "Needs Assessment of Primary Care Practice-Based Research Networks (PBRNs)". In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104–13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)), AHRQ invites the public to comment on this proposed information collection.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by March 10, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be submitted to: Cynthia D. McMichael, Reports Clearance Officer, AHRQ, 2101

East Jefferson Street, Suite 500, Rockville, MD 20852-4908. Copies of the proposed collection plans, data collection instruments, and specific details on the estimated burden can be obtained from the AHRQ Reports Clearance Officer.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Cynthia D. McMichael, AHRQ Reports Clearance Officer, (301) 594-3132.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Proposed Project**

“Needs Assessment of Primary Care Practice-Based Research Networks (PBRNs)”

The project is being conducted in response to an AHRQ RFP entitled “Resource Center for Primary Care Practice-Based Research Networks (PBRNs)” (issued under Contract 290-02-0008). The Healthcare Research and Quality Act of 1999, amending section 911(b) of Title IX of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 299 *et seq.*), states that AHRQ will “employ research strategies and mechanisms that will link research directly with clinical practice in geographically diverse locations \* \* \* including provider-based research network”.

In order to assist AHRQ in meeting this goal, AHRQ created an RFP that specifically requires a resource center to “access the specific needs, if any, of each PBRN awarded (by AHRQ)” by determining “the stage of development of networks funded under the PBRN initiatives [AHRQ RFA-HS-02-003] and the specific resource needs of each network.”

The PBRNs are groups of primary care practices working together with academic researchers to address community-based health care research questions and to translate research findings into practice to improve health

care. AHRQ funded 36 PBRNs in September, 2002, as well as a Resource Center intended to provide technical assistance and support to the PMRNs in their efforts to design and implement research projects. It is expected that an additional 24 PBRNs will be funded in 2003. In the proposed activities, the PBRN Resource Center will collect data directly from each PBRN and their affiliated practices. The collection is a needs assessment of each of the AHRQ funded PBRNs. The collection will identify how the Resource Center can best support these networks through the development and use of information technology, and by linking the PBRNs with appropriate technical experts.

The in-depth needs assessment of each PBRN will use written and web surveys and telephone interviews. Each needs assessment will ascertain the current capabilities of an individual PBRN in several respects, including:

- The ability to design and implement appropriately rigorous and complex research plans, including their access to key resources such as validated instruments and competence conducting advanced data analysis;
- The technical capacity for conducting data management tasks such as aggregating research data across networks, developing data files, and warehousing data;
- The ability to use information technology to foster effective communication with affiliated practices and with other research networks;
- The ability to address HHS priorities such as research involving populations of diverse race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, gender and geography as well as preparedness for bioterrorism and other emerging public health threats;

- The ability to engage the network’s practicing clinicians and community representatives in the design, conduct and dissemination of research studies;

- The ability to design and implement data collection instruments in clinical settings;

- The mechanisms for supporting AHRQ’s central goal of assuring new research findings are translated into everyday practice; and

- Their capacity for long-term sustainability.

To obtain the necessary information, surveys and interviews will be conducted with PBRN staff and staff members in each network’s participating practices.

**Method of Collection**

Due to the relatively small number of organizations in the respondent universe of AHRQ funded PBRNs, and the expected diversity of needs, we will survey all of the AHRQ funded PBRNs (including those to be funded in 2003).

The method of data collection for the needs assessments consists of web-based and paper-based surveys and telephone interviews. We expect to involve multiple individuals from each PBRN in the data collection, including the PBRN administrator, information technology personnel, and the PBRN’s lead clinician as well as individuals with similar roles at the affiliated practice level.

All individuals or networks unable to complete the survey via the Web will be sent a paper-based survey to complete and return by mail. The Resource Center will data enter any surveys completed by hand so that these responses can be included in the analyses. Non-respondents will receive a telephone reminder and, if necessary, will be sent an additional survey.

**ESTIMATED ANNUAL RESPONDENT BURDEN**

Data collection effort	Number of respondents	Estimated time per respondent in hours	Estimated total burden hours	Average hourly wage rate	Estimated annual cost to the Government
Needs assessment .....	180 (maximum of three individuals from each of 60 PBRNs).	1	180	*40.26	\$7,246.80
Needs assessment .....	720 (maximum of two individuals at member practices PBRNs)***.	0.5	360	**45.77	16,477.20
Total .....	900 .....	0.6	540		

**Footnotes:**

\*Based on the mean of the average wages for manager in medicine and health, physicians, and computer systems analyst/scientist, National Compensation Survey: Occupational Wages in the United States, 2000, “U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2001”.

\*\*Based on the mean of the average wages for manager in medicine and health and physicians, “National Compensation Survey: Occupational Wages in the United States, 2000”, “U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2001”.

\*\*\*This estimate assumes that variation exists in the number of member practices that comprise each PBRN. Consequently, we will survey two individuals (the lead clinician and the administrator) at each of three member practices in 20 PBRNs; in 20 PBRNs we will survey two individuals at each of six member practices; and in 20 PBRNs we will survey two individuals at each of nine member practices.

## Estimated Annual Costs to the Federal Government

The total cost to the government for activities directly related to this data collection is \$432,451.00.

## Request for Comments

In accordance with the above cited legislation, comments on the AHRQ information collection proposal are requested with regard to any of the following: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of functions of AHRQ, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of AHRQ's estimate of the burden (including hours and costs) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval of the proposed information collection. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated: December 30, 2002.

**Carolyn M. Clancy,**

*Acting Director.*

[FR Doc. 03-289 Filed 1-6-03; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

#### Notice of Meetings

In accordance with section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act as amended (5 U.S.C., Appendix 2), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) announces meetings of scientific peer review groups. The subcommittees listed below are part of the Agency's Health Services Research Initial Review Group Committee.

The subcommittee meetings will be closed to the public in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, section 10(d) of 5 U.S.C., Appendix 2 and 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(6). Grant applications are to be reviewed and discussed at these meetings. These discussions are likely to involve information concerning individuals associated with the applications, including assessments of their personal qualifications to conduct their proposed

projects. This information is exempt from mandatory disclosure under the above-cited statutes.

1. *Name of Subcommittee:* Health Care Research Training.

*Date:* January 23-24, 2003 (Open from 8 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. on January 23 and closed for remainder of the meeting).

*Place:* AHRQ, 6010 Executive Boulevard, 4th Floor Conference Center, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

2. *Name of Subcommittee:* Health Care Technology and Decision Sciences.

*Date:* February 6-7, 2003 (Open from 8 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. on February 6 and closed for remainder of the meeting).

*Place:* AHRQ, 6010 Executive Boulevard, 4th Floor Conference Center, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

3. *Name of Subcommittee:* Health Research Dissemination and Implementation.

*Date:* February 10-11, 2003 (Open from 8 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. on February 10 and closed for remainder of the meeting).

*Place:* AHRQ, 6010 Executive Boulevard, 4th Floor Conference Center, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

4. *Name of Subcommittee:* Health Systems Research.

*Date:* February 24-25, 2003 (Open for 6 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. on February 24 and closed for remainder of the meeting).

*Place:* Doubletree Hotel, 1750 Rockville Pike, Conference Room TBD, Rockville, Maryland 20852 (For February 24 Meeting). AHRQ, 6010 Executive Boulevard, 4th Floor Conference Center, Rockville, Maryland 20852 (For February 25 Meeting).

5. *Name of Subcommittee:* Health Care Quality and Effectiveness Research.

*Place:* February 26-27, 2003 (Open from 7 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. on February 26 and closed for remainder of the meeting).

*Place:* Doubletree Hotel, 1750 Rockville Pike, Conference Room TBD, Rockville, Maryland 20852 (For February 26 Meeting). AHRQ, 6010 Executive Boulevard, 4th Floor Conference Center, Rockville, Maryland 20852 (For February 27 Meeting).

*Contact Person:* Anyone wishing to obtain a roster of members, agenda or minutes of the nonconfidential portions of the meetings should contact Mrs. Bonnie Campbell, Committee Management Officer, Office of Research Review, Education and Policy, AHRQ, 2101 East Jefferson Street, Suite 400, Rockville, Maryland 20852, Telephone (301) 594-1846.

Agenda items for these meetings are subject to change as priorities dictate.

Dated: December 27, 2002.

**Carolyn M. Clancey,**

*Acting Director.*

[FR Doc. 03-288 Filed 1-6-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4160-90-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[30DAY-17-03]

### Agency Forms Undergoing Paperwork Reduction Act Review

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publishes a list of information collection requests under review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35). To request a copy of these requests, call the CDC Reports Clearance Officer at (404) 498-1210. Send written comments to CDC, Desk Officer, Human Resources and Housing Branch, New Executive Office Building, Room 10235, Washington, DC 20503. Written comments should be received within 30 days of this notice.

*Proposed Project:* The National Birth Defects Prevention Study (OMB 0920-0010)—Extension—National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been monitoring the occurrence of serious birth defects and genetic diseases in Atlanta since 1967 through the Metropolitan Atlanta Congenital Defects Program (MACDP). The MACDP is a population-based surveillance system for birth defects in the five counties of Metropolitan Atlanta. Its primary purpose is to describe the spatial and temporal patterns of birth defects occurrence and serve as an early warning system for new teratogens. From 1993 to 1996, NCBDDD conducted the Birth Defects Risk Factor Surveillance (BDRFS) study, a case-control study of risk factors for selected birth defects. Infants with birth defects were identified through MACDP and maternal interviews, and clinical/laboratory tests were conducted on approximately 300 cases and 100 controls per year. Controls were selected from among normal births in the same population. In 1997 the BDRFS became the National Birth Defects Prevention Study (NBDPS). The major components of the study did not change.

The NBDPS is a case-control study of major birth defects that includes cases identified from existing birth defect surveillance registries in ten states (including metropolitan Atlanta). Control infants are randomly selected from birth certificates or birth hospital records. Mothers of case and control infants are interviewed using a computer-assisted telephone interview. Parents are asked to collect cheek cells