



# National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) Field Staff Insights and Innovations

**Adena Galinsky, Ph.D.**

**Senior Health Survey Statistician**

**Division of Health Interview Statistics (DHIS)**

NCHS Board of Scientific Counselors Meeting

September 14, 2023

# NHIS Field Staff Support Projects Team

## NCHS

**Adena Galinsky**, Team Lead, NHIS FR Conference Director, and NHIS in the News Editor

**Beth Taylor**, NHIS FR Newsletter Editor

**Grace Medley**, NHIS Respondent Materials Lead and NHIS FR Survey/Focus Groups Lead

**Maria Villarroel**

**Antonia Warren**

**Jonaki Bose**

**Aaron Maitland**, DHIS Survey Planning and Special Surveys Branch Chief

**Stephen Blumberg**, DHIS Division Director and NHIS Director

## U.S. Census Bureau

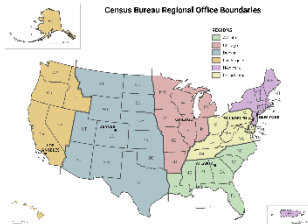
**Lindsay Howden**, Survey Director of the NHIS Survey Team at Census

**Lillian Hoffman**, Assistant Survey Director of the NHIS Survey Team at Census

# National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)



- Multi-purpose gold standard household health survey
  - Nationally representative annual sample: ~27,000 adults & ~9,000 children
  - National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)
- Data collection agent: U.S. Census Bureau
  - 800+ NHIS Field Representatives (FRs) gain cooperation and conduct interviews via home visits and calls



6 Regional Offices (ROs)



Field Division at Census HQ:  
Usually the intermediary  
between NCHS and ROs

# Motivation and theory

- Motivation: Respect and concern for the FRs
  - Also: Their success is the foundation of the NHIS's success
- Theory: Effective, successful interviewer education and support is...
  - Customized to interviewer needs
  - Enriched by interviewer expertise
  - Accounts for supervisor and manager needs and preferences

**Asking and listening: Five initiatives to  
gather field staff expertise**




## Six initiatives to gather field staff expertise

1. NHIS All-Regional-Offices Listening Tour (Spring 2022)
2. NHIS Respondent Materials FR Focus Groups (Summer 2022; Follow-up Spring 2023)
3. NHIS FR Survey (Summer 2022)
4. NHIS FR Conference (Fall 2022)
5. Statewide Team Approach meeting (Spring 2022/2023)
6. Regional Survey Managers meeting (Spring 2023)






**Insights: Help wanted and successful strategies**

## Insights: Help wanted

<b>Reluctant respondents</b>	<b>Access barriers</b>	<b>Morale</b>
		






# Insights: Successful strategies

<b>Reluctant respondents</b> 	<b>Access barriers</b> 	<b>Morale</b> 
Hand-written notes  Variety of strategies for connecting and persisting  Statewide Team Model	Hand-written notes  Variety of strategies for connecting and persisting  Statewide Team Model	Variety of strategies for staying positive and managing and reducing stress       NHIS Results

**Help provided: Six FR Support Projects**

# Type of help provided by each initiative

	Reluctant respondents 	Access barriers 	Morale 
NHIS FR Conference	✓	✓	✓
NHIS in the News	✓		✓
NHIS FR Newsletter	✓		✓
NHIS Notes Training/Cards	✓	✓	
NHIS Team Meetings	✓	✓	✓
NHIS 30-second pitches	✓	✓	✓

# 2022 NHIS FR Conference



- Goals: Continue, expand, and enrich the dialogue
  - Foster FR connection with each other
  - Provide opportunities for FRs to learn from each other
  - Provide opportunities for NCHS to learn from field staff & managers
- Structure and content
  - Interactive FR-chosen workshops and discussion groups
  - Handouts: FR-provided advice and FR-requested job aids
  - Q&A sessions
  - Morale building:
    - Team building activities
    - Awards ceremony, RO meeting, NHIS and CDC Directors addresses

# Two new FR Resources



## NHIS in the News (monthly)

- Goal: Boost morale via providing meaning and celebration of success
- Monthly compilation of headlines and quotes from news articles about NHIS Research



## NHIS FR Newsletter (quarterly)

- Goals: Improve morale, sense of connection & belonging, provide help with gaining cooperation
- Q&A, research results, interviewer profiles/field tips, historical tidbits

# NHIS FR note writing initiative

- Goal: Motivate and prepare FRs to hand-write notes to help make contact and gain cooperation
- Implementation
  - New blank NHIS notecards



- Note writing motivational training module
- Printed job aid with sample note text

# Two FR support programs in progress



## NHIS Team Meeting Pilot Program

Goal: Provide regular paid opportunity to connect with and get encouragement and help from other FRs



## “30 Second Pitch” Project

Goal: Produce communication tools FRs can use to quickly gain the attention and interest of reluctant and hard-to-reach respondents (and motivate those respondents to make contact with FR)

# Questions for the BSC

- How would you explain the benefits and value of the NHIS to reluctant respondents?
- How can NHIS FRs address and overcome anti-CDC hostility?
- What system of supports could help FRs attempting to contact survey respondents in gated communities and locked buildings?



# Thank you!

For more information, contact CDC  
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)  
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

