



Medical Expenditure Panel Survey

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MEPS NHIS Link: 1996 - 2022 MEPS-NHIS Link Files

Release date: May 2024

All of the 1996-2022 completed MEPS-NHIS Link files are available through the AHRQ Data Center. Each MEPS-NHIS Link file contains a crosswalk that allows data users to merge MEPS Full-Year public use files (PUFs) to NHIS person-level public use data files that contain data collected for MEPS respondents in the year prior to their initial year of MEPS participation.

- [Notes on viewing and downloading files](#)
- [Printing tips](#)

Specifically, for the 1996-2019 MEPS-HC, each MEPS-NHIS Link file contains a crosswalk that enables data users to merge the MEPS Full-Year Population Characteristics PUF, or similarly, the MEPS Full-Year Consolidated PUF with the NHIS person-level PUFs that contain data collected for MEPS respondents in the year prior to their initial year of MEPS participation. In each link file, a record exists for each person in the MEPS Full-Year PUFs. Sample persons in NHIS that do not link to any MEPS sample persons are not represented in the link file. Sample persons in the MEPS file who do not link with persons in the NHIS PUFs have values of 999999, 99, and 99 for the NHIS sample person IDs HHX, FMX, and FPX, respectively.

The 1996-2019 MEPS-HC collect data through an overlapping panel design. Each MEPS Full-Year PUF covers a full calendar year and contains data from Rounds 3, 4, and 5 of the MEPS first panel (which uses the NHIS prior data year 1 as its sampling frame) combined with data from Rounds 1, 2, and 3 of the MEPS second panel (which uses the NHIS prior data year 2 as its sampling frame).

For the 2020 MEPS-HC, the PUFs included three overlapping panels instead of two panels. This design change increased the sample size to compensate for low response rates and data collection challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the 2020 MEPS-NHIS Link file contains a crosswalk that will enable data users to merge the MEPS Full-Year PUFs with the corresponding NHIS person-level PUFs for three prior years that contain data collected for MEPS respondents in the year prior to their initial year of MEPS participation.

For the 2021 MEPS-HC, the PUFs included four overlapping panels instead of two panels. This design change increased the sample size to compensate for low response rates and data collection challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the 2021 MEPS-NHIS Link file contains a crosswalk that will enable data users to merge the MEPS Full-Year PUFs with the corresponding NHIS person-level PUFs for four prior years that contain data collected for MEPS respondents in the year prior to their initial year of MEPS participation.

For the 2022 MEPS-HC, the PUFs included three overlapping panels instead of two panels. This design change increased the sample size to compensate for low response rates and data collection challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the 2022 MEPS-NHIS Link file contains a crosswalk that will enable data users to merge the MEPS Full-Year PUFs with the corresponding NHIS person-level PUFs for 2018, 2020, and 2021 that contain data collected for MEPS respondents in the year prior to their initial year of MEPS participation.

In addition, due to the 2019 NHIS redesign, from each household only one adult and one child (if any children live in the household) were included in the NHIS sample. As a result, potentially only one adult and one child (if any), in each MEPS household in the 2020 or later MEPS panel could be linked to the 2019 or later NHIS PUF. The persons in the 2020 MEPS PUF who do not link with the persons in the NHIS PUFs for the prior 1, 2, or 3 data years (NHIS 2017-2019) have values of 999999, 99, 99, and 99 for the NHIS sample person IDs HHX, FMX, FPX, and RECTYPE, respectively. The persons in the 2021 MEPS PUF who do not link with the persons in the NHIS PUFs for the prior 1, 2, 3, or 4 data years (NHIS 2017-2020) have values of 999999, 99, 99, and 99 for the NHIS sample person IDs HHX, FMX, FPX, and RECTYPE, respectively. The persons in the 2022 MEPS PUF who do not link with the persons in the NHIS PUFs (NHIS 2018, 2020, and 2021) have values of 999999, 99, 99, and 99 for the NHIS sample person IDs HHX, FMX, FPX, and RECTYPE, respectively.

For reasons of confidentiality, the MEPS-NHIS Link files are available only through the [AHRQ Data Center](#). Additionally, qualified researchers can also access the MEPS-NHIS Link files through the [Federal Statistical Research Data Centers \(FSRDC\)](#). For information on the FSRDC research proposal process and the data sets available, read the [AHRQ-Census Bureau agreement on access to restricted MEPS data](#).

Documentation	File type
Documentation	PDF (273 KB) / HTML

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