



A Guide to Request Data Access from The University of Texas School of Public Health, Center for Health Care Data, a Qualified Entity Data Repository

The mission of The University of Texas School of Public Health, Center for Health Care Data (“CHCD”) is to foster research and inform the public, academia, and other constituents about healthcare costs and utilization with the goal of contributing to the discussion on improving efficiency and controlling health care costs in Texas and across the nation. The Center for Health Care Data has obtained a variety of healthcare data sets, such as commercial claims, Medicaid and Medicare claims, and electronic medical records. In addition, the CHCD has cataloged datasets on social, economic, educational, and environmental variables.

All datasets are available for use in projects that relate to the CHCD’s mission in academic and public policy research, but not for commercial or competitive purposes.

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Instructions

Due to the sensitivity of the data at the CHCD, we have developed a process to help streamline the requests we receive. All requirements must be completed before access to the data is given. Our team is available to assist and help guide each requestor through the following steps:

1. **Submit a Data Request:** Submit an electronic request using our online form on CHCD's [Data Request webpage](#). The Data Request will capture the following information:
 - Project lead contact information (e.g., name, email, organization affiliation)
 - Services requested
 - Data extract(s)
 - Data analysis
 - Other
 - Region of interest (e.g., Texas, National)
 - Data of interest
 - Healthcare administrative claims
 - National Electronic Health Records
 - Non-medical Drivers of Health (NMDoH)
 - Texas Hospital Discharge Data
 - Undecided
 - Brief Description of the project
 - Funding (if applicable)
 - Research question (e.g. aims, target population)
 - Purpose of study
 - Grant application details
 - Data set needed
 - Years needed
 - Timeline

Are you requesting analysis support from CHCD? The CHCD will reply with whether the project is within our scope or requires modification.

2. **Application Submission:** Once the initial data request is approved, complete the application steps below (See [Application Instructions](#).)
3. **Data Extract/Analysis Request Form:** Fill in the data extraction template provided by the CHCD. Please include as much detail as possible. (See [Request Form Instructions](#).)
4. **Application approval:** Once the application is approved, submit:
 - a. Signed data use agreement (DUA) provided by the CHCD
 - b. IRB approval for all persons involved in the project. For those requesting to use non-medical drivers of health (NMDoH) data only, the DUA and IRB approval will not be required.
5. **Additional external agency approvals may be needed:** Certain data sets may require external agency approvals. CHCD will advise you as to which data sets require this step.
6. **Payment of fees to CHCD.** A fee is applied to all requests to cover various costs associated with data extraction. Access to the requested data will be granted after payment has been rendered.

Waiver of fees for The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health students may be requested by emailing CHCD@uth.tmc.edu a letter explaining the reason for the request

For University of Texas Students Only

- Students intending to use the data for their dissertation must contact us before starting on the proposal to explore the feasibility of their proposed study and possible overlap with ongoing or planned projects.
- All student projects require a faculty member of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health on the dissertation committee or a data custodian from CHCD.
- The research protocol submitted in your application needs to be the maximum 2,000-word summary of your final protocol version for your research project approved by your dissertation committee. Please report the name of your committee members and contact information. We will require confirmation from your committee chair.
- Students must submit a letter of support signed by a CHCD-affiliated faculty member.

Prerequisites to Use Requested Data

Healthcare Data

As per our legal agreements, we have strict conditions that need to be met to use any healthcare data. Please read through the following criteria:

- The data must be accessed through CHCD and cannot be used outside the secure server at CHCD or The University of Texas at Austin Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC). If granted permission to use the data, you will be required to remotely connect to the secure server where your data extract will be placed. You can only work with the data in this environment. **NO data can leave our server.** Only analysis results that do not contain identification (for members or providers) can be saved outside the server. We offer updated versions of SAS, STATA, ArcGis, and R that can be used for analysis. If there is a need for a different software, please contact us.
- Researchers intending to use the data for funded projects must contact the CHCD before beginning the grant proposal process to explore the feasibility of their proposed study and possible overlap with ongoing or planned projects CHCD@uth.tmc.edu.
- All research projects must have a UT Research collaborator on the project team.
- Each dataset has requirements for use that may require external approvals.
 - a. Texas Medicaid data requires the consent of the Texas Health & Human Services Commission.
 - b. Texas Medicare data must fall under the approval of the Medicare Decision Tree.

For those who do not have experience working with healthcare data (claims and EMR), we recommend working with a researcher who has the experience, as we are unable to provide detailed feedback and guidance.

- Access is granted only **to those individuals listed in the research protocol (the IRB and with a signed DUA on file) for the approved research project and a specified period**. Before the specified period expires, you will need to request a data access extension application to maintain your access.

To ensure compliance with data use, all researchers must send any abstract, poster, or manuscript that uses the data to CHCD at CHCD@uth.tmc.edu no less than five (5) business days before submission for publication.

Non-Medical Drivers of Health

(Education access, healthcare access, social, economic, and environmental variables)

Data on non-medical drivers of health (NMDoH) have been collected through various trusted and publicly available sources. If interested only in NMDoH data, no prerequisites need to be met. However, if interested in healthcare data and NMDoH data, all previous prerequisites will need to be met.

Application Instructions

Please follow the corresponding application instructions to request healthcare data or SDOH data. If interested in both, only submit one application following the healthcare application instructions.

Healthcare Data

In a Word document, please include the following components for the application submission:

- I. Investigators: List the names, titles, organization affiliations, and contact information for all investigators and staff on the project who will have access to the data. Please include all investigators and staff in the IRB and indicate who the Principal Investigator is.
- II. Research Protocol: Provide a maximum 2,000-word summary of your research protocol, including:
 - a. Statement of the research question and why the requested data is needed for the project
 - b. How the work will be done
 - c. Background and significance
 - d. Specific aims
 - e. Research design and methodology
 - f. Dissemination plans
- III. Confidentiality Procedures: A list of procedures that will be followed to maintain the confidentiality of data as outlined in the IRB protocol
- IV. Work/plan and timeline
- V. Intended source of research funding

NMDoH Data Only

In a Word document, please include the following components for the application submission to request NMDoH data only:

- I. Investigators: Provide the Principal Investigator with contact information (title, organization affiliation, email)
- II. Protocol: Briefly summarize how the requested data will be used. Please consider providing the following:
 - a. Statement of the research question and why the requested data is needed for the project
 - b. How the work will be done
 - c. Specific aims
 - d. Research design and methodology
 - e. Dissemination plans

Other Required Forms

Data Extract/Analysis Request Form

As a companion document to the application, please submit the data extraction plan using the Excel spreadsheet supplied by CHCD.

- Be detailed and specific as possible. Keep in mind that this is what will be used to extract the data; therefore, misspecifications may lead to a delay in your data extraction or inability to extract the data.
- Record all plan changes using the same document.
- Include all relevant inclusion and exclusion criteria. For example, if you want individuals 18 years or older, you need to specify how you like this defined (e.g., 18 years or older by 1/1/2008 or 18 or older at the date of service). Make sure you include the necessary information for extracting your data, such as ICD-9 or ICD-10 diagnosis codes or procedure codes that will help to identify your population.
- Explain why each requested variable is necessary to answer the research questions.
- Your data extraction plan must reflect the minimum data required to answer your question. Make sure you review the data dictionary as well as our data description brochure before working on your extraction plan. Please contact us if you have questions regarding the availability or meaning of certain variables.

Data Use Agreement (DUA)

The CHCD will prepare a data use agreement based on the requested data type. The DUA will be given to the interested party for their review and signature. All investigators and staff must sign a DUA or any other agreements required by contracts with dataset providers and obtain training in data use.