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## National Center for Health Statistics: Electronic Information Dissemination

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The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) collects and disseminates statistics on health status, use of health care resources and vital statistics. In addition to distributing paper copies of reports, we have been putting our publications on our Internet home page for about a year and a half. The files, in .PDF format, are added to the home page when the publications go to the printer. That means that you may be able to print a copy of one of our reports from the Internet before any paper copies have been printed. I will be showing you the features of our home page in a moment. You'll find flyers with the URL address in the back of the room <http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/nchshome.htm>. The .PDF files need to be viewed with Adobe Acrobat software. There is a link to the free Reader on our home page. Many of you will already have Acrobat installed on your library computers. There are several CD-ROMs that have been distributed through the Depository Library Program that use that software.

Our Advance Data, Monthly Vital Statistics Reports, Vital and Health Statistics Series, and most miscellaneous reports can be searched and printed over the Internet. We do not have the Vital Statistics of the United States in electronic format yet, nor have we started to convert the older reports. The latest publications are found under What's New. The icons underneath the titles evoke the Acrobat Reader you have installed on your computer and display the full text of the publications.

[Demonstration of NCHS home page: viewing information about the data collection systems, searching for a word in a publication, reviewing the list of electronic products, using the query button to ask a question.]

We get about 30 requests per day through the query feature. If you need copies of our reports, or have a question about the data, this is a good avenue for you to use. We try to respond within 24 hours. Detailed questions about the data may take a little longer.

Many of you are familiar with our CD-ROMs, both the data CD-ROMs and the publications CD-ROM. We issued our first CD-ROM with copies of our reports, including some of the Vital and Health Statistics Series, the Rainbow Series, as .PDF files, last year. The disc features Health, United States, 1994. We will be issuing another publications CD-ROM,

when Health, United States, 1995 is released this summer. The disc will also include other publications issued since the first CD-ROM was produced.

We've published some new data CD-ROMs recently. Someone asked me why the Center publishes the microdata on CD-ROM instead of just publishing all of the reports on CD-ROM. The answer is the data sets are the source of the information published in the reports and they can be analyzed in many different ways. The Center does analyses to produce reports on the most important and most sought after aspects of the data. The microdata are distributed on CD-ROM and magnetic tape for researchers to analyze other aspects of the data.

These data sets on magnetic tape are described in depth in the catalog of electronic products. Only a small number of the data sets are also available on CD-ROM. The data CD-ROMs in your libraries represent some of the data sets that were used to produce the published reports from NCHS. The catalog of electronic products can be a useful reference tool. Related reports are listed for each of the data collection systems. This catalog is accessible through our home page, or we can send you a paper copy. A searchable electronic version of the electronic products catalog, on diskette, for use with Windows, is also available without cost from NCHS.

We now have about 20 data CD-ROMs, which also contain the documentation necessary to use and analyze the microdata, and software to manipulate the data. The software, the Statistical Export and Tabulation System (SETS), allows the user to search and print the documentation, create two-way tables, create tables with rates, and export subsets to use with statistical software, such as SAS. I do have a tutorial on disk, in .PDF format, that walks you through the functions of the SETS software and makes suggestions about use of the NCHS data CD-ROMs in a library setting. If you would like a copy, ask for the Joy of SETS, either through the Internet query or over the telephone. There are bookmarks in the back of the room that have the telephone number on them (301-436-8500). Please let us know if you will also need a disk with the Acrobat software to read the .PDF file. We can send both to you without charge. There is also a list of our CD-ROMs in the back of the room. The 1993 National Health Interview Survey on CD-ROM has just been published, and we expect the 1991 Multiple Cause- of-Death CD-ROM in the near future.

We have very few diskettes. Two that might be of interest to you are the tables from Health, United States, 1994, in spreadsheet format and tables from the Trends in the Health of Older Americans, 1994 (Series 3 no. 30) in spreadsheet format. Another electronic product, that we expect to have ready this summer, is a catalog of publications issued from 1962 through 1994. We think the catalog will be on diskette rather than CD-ROM. It will be searchable with Acrobat and will include the authors' names and the dates of the publications. We expect to distribute it without cost.