To Whom It May Concern:

I am responding to the request for comments about the proposed questionnaire redesign of the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). I am alarmed that the changes to the NHIS announced on February 22, 2016, will discontinue the family questionnaire that collects basic demographic, socioeconomic, health status, disability, and health insurance information about everyone in the sampled household. The revised survey will only collect this information for one sampled adult and one sampled child per household. In the description of the questionnaire changes, it is unclear whether the collection of *family* income and poverty information will also be discontinued.

The proposed termination of the family survey is a dramatic departure from the previous fifty years of NHIS data collection and greatly reduces the utility of the NHIS to answer today’s pressing health questions, in two ways:

1. First, **we will no longer be able to use the NHIS to study the effects of family context on health**.
2. Second, **the use of the NHIS to study health disparities will be severely curtailed** because the new design will be less likely to capture large enough samples of special populations like immigrant families and children, people with disabilities, or persons in same-sex relationships.

The importance of maintaining data collection about all members of the household is clear. The current system of collecting individual information for the entire household works because it is flexible, allowing researchers to select the family characteristics most relevant to their studies. Removing the measurement of family characteristics from the most important national survey of U.S. health will leave a disturbing gap in public health surveillance and population data infrastructure and will harm the state of health knowledge for years to come.

I urge you to reconsider the decision to eliminate the collection of vital demographic, socioeconomic, and health information about all members of sampled NHIS households.

Sincerely,

[**Your name here**]

cc: ipums@umn.edu