

**Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**  
**SOPS™ Hospital Database**  
**Information and Instructions for Requesting Hospital-Identifiable SOPS Data**

**This document is for individuals interested in requesting hospital-identifiable data from the AHRQ Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture Database.**

**Introduction**

The Surveys on Patient Safety Culture™ (SOPS™) Hospital Database is a central repository for Hospital SOPS survey data. The Hospital SOPS Database is funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and managed and administered by its contractor, Westat.

The Hospital SOPS Database is populated with Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture data through the voluntary participation of U.S. hospitals that have administered the survey and are willing to submit their data for inclusion in the database. Because hospitals voluntarily submit data to the database, the data do not constitute a nationally representative sample.

AHRQ, and its contractor, Westat, may grant researchers access to hospital-identifiable data from the database, for research purposes. Hospital-identifiable data files contain hospital identifiers, such as hospital name, address, and Medicare Provider ID, which may be used to link the data to other measures for research purposes. Researchers using hospital-identifiable patient safety culture survey data may not release, disclose or make public any identifying information about specific hospitals at any time.

Hospital-identifiable data files do not identify individual respondents within hospitals. Hospital-identifiable patient safety culture survey data is only provided to researchers after hospitals that have submitted to the database provide written authorization to release their hospital-identifiable data.

**Process for Requesting Hospital-Identifiable Data**

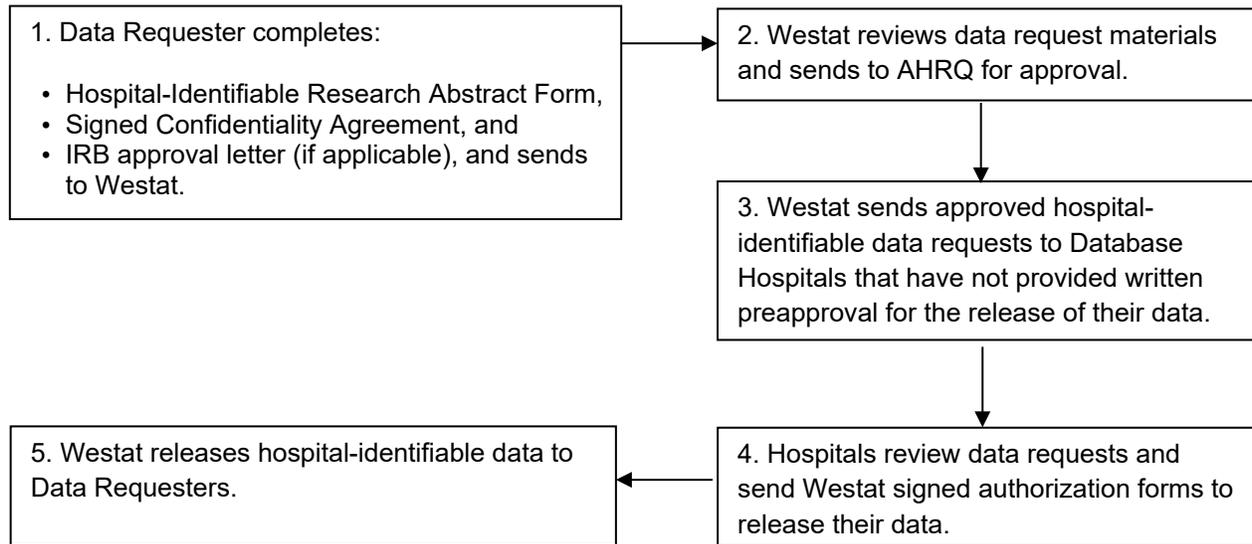
Researchers interested in obtaining data must submit:

1. A completed Hospital-Identifiable Research Abstract Form
2. A signed Confidentiality Agreement and
3. An Institutional Review Board (IRB) letter approving the proposed research, if Data Requester's organization has an IRB

All completed Research Abstract Forms are reviewed by Westat to ensure completeness and clarity, and to verify that the hospital-identifiable data is being requested for appropriate purposes. Requests are then submitted to AHRQ for review and approval. All approved data requests are submitted to those Database hospitals that have not provided written pre-approval for the release of their hospital-identifiable data. Database hospitals review the data requests and decide whether or not to authorize release of their hospital-identifiable data to each Data Requester on a case-by-case basis.

The process is outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Flowchart of Process for Releasing Hospital-Identifiable Patient Safety Culture Data



AHRQ reviews hospital-identifiable data requests year-round, but only sends approved requests to database hospitals once a year. Typically, hospitals are given 12 weeks to provide written authorization for the release of their data. Once written authorization is received, it typically takes another 12 weeks to release the identifiable data to Data Requesters.

### Hospital-Identifiable Research Abstract Form Contents

Research abstracts should include the following information:

1. Title of the proposed research project.
2. Statement of the purpose of the proposed research.
3. Hypotheses for the proposed research.
4. Description of the methodology and analytic methods.
5. Expected project timeline.
6. Hospital-identifiable data years requested.
7. Expected outcomes of the research and how results will be presented.
8. Any funding sources to complete the project.
9. Indication of whether or not Data Requester's organization has an IRB.
10. Key personnel involved

### Conditions for Denying a Request for Hospital-Identifiable Data

Requests for access to hospital-identifiable data files may be denied under any of the following conditions:

1. If the central purpose of the study is not for research. Valid purposes for using hospital-identifiable data do NOT include the use of data for public reporting, proprietary, commercial, or competitive purposes, or to determine the rights, benefits, or privileges of organizations participating in the database. An example of commercial or competitive purposes includes, but is not limited to, combining the requested database data with other data sources to report together for commercial or public reporting purposes.
2. If the research objectives are not feasible using the requested data.

3. If the data processing required to produce the requested data files places an unusually heavy burden on database staff.
4. If fewer than 20 hospitals provide express written authorization to release identifiable data for a specific data request. (There is no guarantee regarding the number of database hospitals that will authorize release of their data.)

If there are concerns about a submitted Research Abstract Form raised during the review process, the comments of the reviewers will be sent to the Requester. Data Requesters may make modifications and resubmit the Research Abstract Form for review.

### **Publication Requirements**

Individuals receiving hospital-identifiable patient safety culture survey data are required to include the following acknowledgment in any report, publication, or presentation using hospital-identifiable SOPS Database data:

“The Hospital SOPS™ data used in this analysis was provided by the Hospital SOPS Database. The Hospital SOPS Database is funded by the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and administered by Westat under Contract Number HHSP233201500026I / HHSP23337004T.”

Copies of all publications and presentations using hospital-identifiable SOPS Database data must be sent to SOPS Databases.

### **Disclaimer**

Approval of data requests does not constitute endorsement by AHRQ or Westat of the proposed research project, study findings, or recommendations of the research team.

### **Applying for Hospital-Identifiable SOPS Data and Contact Information**

Researchers interested in obtaining hospital-identifiable SOPS data from the Hospital SOPS Database must submit a completed Hospital-identifiable Research Abstract Form and Confidentiality Agreement. These forms are available by emailing [SOPSPResearchData@westat.com](mailto:SOPSPResearchData@westat.com) (Subject line: SOPS Hospital-Identifiable Data Request).

Surveys on Patient Safety Culture Research Databases  
Westat  
Phone: 1-888-324-9790  
Fax: 1-888-852-8277  
Email: [SOPSPResearchData@westat.com](mailto:SOPSPResearchData@westat.com)