



maryland  
**health services**  
cost review commission

**Final Staff Recommendation for a Request to Access  
HSCRC Confidential Patient Level Data from  
The New York University (NYU), Marron Institute of Urban  
Management**

Health Services Cost Review Commission

4160 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21215

October 14, 2020

**This is a final recommendation for Commission consideration at the October 14, 2020 Public Commission Meeting.**

## **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

The New York University (NYU) Marron Institute of Urban Management is requesting access to Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) Inpatient and Outpatient Hospital data containing limited confidential information (“the Data”) to investigate the impact of the Air Quality Index (AQI) on health outcomes and improve the design of the AQI.

## **OBJECTIVE**

In the United States, the AQI provides local, daily reports on air pollution risk; however, this index has not been evaluated against health data on a national scale. This environmental epidemiology research project aims to: 1) reveal the association between AQI and respiratory morbidity, and how that varies across regions and age groups; and 2) better interpret AQI values and give insights to policy makers on how to improve the design of AQI. Investigators received approval from the NYU Institutional Review Board (IRB) on February 2, 2018 and from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) IRB on July 15, 2020. The Data will not be used to identify individual hospitals or patients. The Data will be retained by NYU until May 25, 2025; at that time, the Data will be destroyed, and a Certification of Destruction will be submitted to the HSCRC.

## **REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO THE CONFIDENTIAL PATIENT LEVEL DATA**

All requests for the Data are reviewed by HSCRC Confidential Data Review Committee (“the Review Committee”). The Review Committee is comprised of representatives from HSCRC and the Prince George’s County and the Montgomery County Departments of Health and Behavioral Health Administrations. The role of the Review Committee is to determine whether the study meets the minimum requirements described below and to make recommendations for approval to the HSCRC at its monthly public meeting.

1. The proposed study or research is in the public interest;
2. The study or research design is sound from a technical perspective;
3. The organization is credible;
4. The organization is in full compliance with HIPAA, the Privacy Act, Freedom Act, and all other state and federal laws and regulations, including Medicare regulations; and
5. The organization has adequate data security procedures in place to ensure protection of patient confidentiality.

The Review Committee unanimously agreed to recommend that NYU be given access to the Data. As a condition for approval, the applicant will be required to file annual progress reports to the HSCRC, detailing any changes in goals, design, or duration of the project; data handling procedures; or unanticipated events related to the confidentiality of the data. Additionally, the applicant will submit a copy of the final report to the HSCRC for review prior to public release.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

1. HSCRC staff recommends that the request by NYU for the Data for Calendar Year 2013 through 2018 be approved.
2. This access will include limited confidential information for subjects meeting the criteria for the research.