



Experiments to convert partials to completes

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FCSM 2023

Challenges of Mail-Push-to-Web

- A number of state Health Interview Studies (HIS) rely on Mail-Push-to-Web methodologies
- Unlike phone interviews, partially completed interviews are more common on the web
 - Often accounting for 20%-30% of interviews that are started
- What constitute a partial?
 - Anywhere from one question answered to most questions answered
 - Study specific
- For these cases, reminders were either not successful or not existent (depending on when the respondent started the interview)
- Why did respondents break off?
 - Dissatisfied with survey content
 - Dissatisfied with a specific question
 - Lack of time
 - Loss of interest



Background

- We started looking into partials for CHIS, due to an increase in 2021
- We noted some demographics differences:
 - Lower education
 - More Hispanic
 - More uninsured
 - More cell phone
- Important demographics that are often harder to reach



Research Questions?

- What can motivate these respondents to complete their interview?
 - Communication?
 - Pre-incentive?
 - Post-incentive?
- Is the cost of trying to convert a partial lower than getting a complete from fresh sample?



Study #1 - CHIS

- The California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) is the largest state health survey in the nation. It is a leading source of credible and comprehensive data on the health and health care needs of California's large and diverse population
- It is conducted for the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research (CHPR)
- It is fielded every year
- 20,000 adult completes from ABS in 2023
- Mail push-to-web with 4 contacts and phone follow up
 - Invitation letter, with a visible pre-incentive
 - +2 weeks, Reminder postcard
 - +4 weeks, Reminder letter
 - +6 weeks, Reminder postcard
 - +8 weeks, Outbound phone call (matched phone numbers)



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Study #2 - MHIS

- The Massachusetts Health Insurance Survey (MHIS) aims to document health insurance coverage, access to and use of health care, and health care affordability for the noninstitutionalized population in Massachusetts
- It is conducted every two years
- It is conducted for the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA)
- 4,400 ABS completes in the 2023 cycle
- Mail push-to-web with 4 contacts
 - Invitation Letter, with a visible pre-incentive
 - +1 week, Reminder postcard
 - +3 weeks, Reminder letter
 - +4 weeks, Reminder postcard



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The Experiments

CHIS

- Qualified as Partials if screener and section A (demos) were completed
 - Also included “Sufficient Partials”
- 3 Conditions:
 - No intervention
 - Letter only
 - Letter with \$10 promised post-incentive
 - \$10 gift card
- Letter sent in English or bilingual with language used to start the survey

MHIS

- Qualified as Partials if at least one question of the survey was started
- 3 Conditions:
 - Letter only
 - Letter with \$10 promised post-incentive
 - Letter with \$10 promised post-incentive and \$2 visible cash pre-incentive
 - \$10 e-gift card
- Letter sent in English or bilingual English/Spanish depending on the language used to start the survey



The CHIS Letter

Date

Dear California Resident,

About {WEEKS} weeks ago, an adult in this household started the **California Health Survey** but was not able to finish it. If you are not the person who started the survey, please give this letter to that person.

We know your time is valuable. However, we encourage you to just take a few minutes to answer the rest of the questions on the survey. {We are offering a **\$10 thank you gift card** for completing the survey.}

Please complete the survey at www.cahealthsurvey.com

The secure access code is: **A1B2C3D4**



If you do not have access to the internet or would prefer to finish the survey over the phone, please call 1-877-542-3793.

This **California Health Survey** is conducted by UCLA and collects information on the health of people in your state and about issues they have getting health care. The results may help people and families in your community.

Your help is very important to this study's success. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

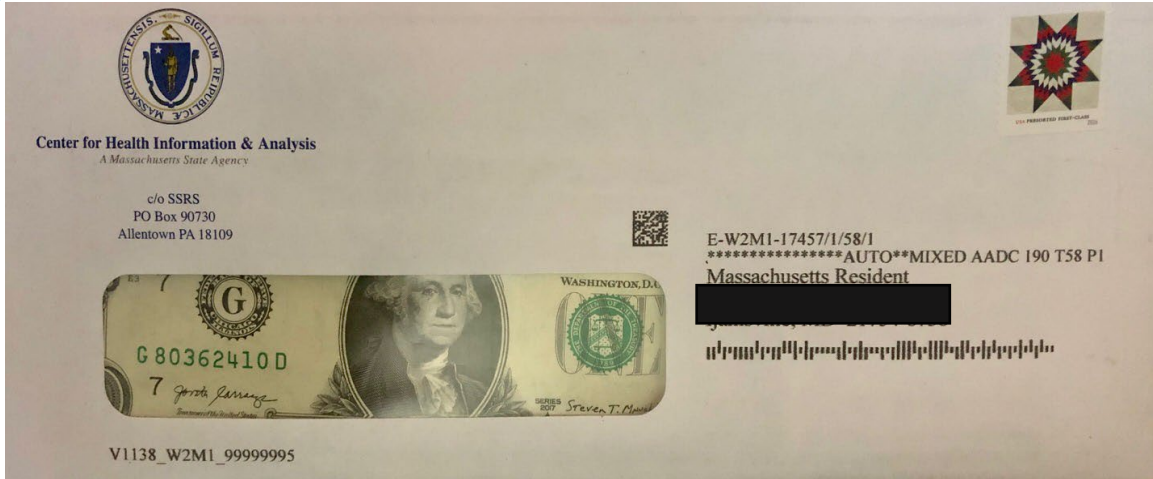
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ninez Ponce'.

Dr. Ninez Ponce
Principal Investigator, California Health Survey

The logo for the Survey of Statewide Research in Statistics (SSRS), consisting of the lowercase letters 'ssrs' in a bold, grey, sans-serif font.



The MHIS Letter



Dear Massachusetts Resident,

A few weeks ago, an adult in this household started the **Massachusetts Health Insurance Survey** but was not able to finish it. If you are not the person who started the survey, please give this letter to that person.

We know your time is valuable. However, we encourage you to just take a few minutes to answer the rest of the questions on the survey. **(Please reconsider completing the survey. / We are offering a \$10 gift card as a thank you for completing the survey.)**

What do you need to do?

1. Access the survey by typing the URL OR scanning the QR code from your mobile device.

mahealthsurveys.gov/mhis



2. Click or tap the survey icon.



3. Enter your secure access code.

<XXXXXX>

Your participation is important!

This important survey collects information about the health of people in Massachusetts and about issues they may have getting health care. Your household was randomly selected to represent many other households like yours. The results may help people in your community.

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Zi Zhang
Deputy Executive Director for Research
Center for Health Information and Analysis

Para completar la encuesta en español, visite
www.mahealthsurveys.gov/mhis.

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Results

	% Converted			
	No Intervention	Letter Only	Letter with \$10 post-incentive	Letter with \$10 post-incentive and \$2 pre-incentive
CHIS*	1.8%	8.4%	5.4%	
MHIS		6.5%	8.8%	16.4%



* Preliminary results

Results (CHIS)

	Printing, Postage, Incentive Costs per Complete				
	Printing	Pre-incentive	Postage	Post-incentive	Cost per Complete
CHIS – normal protocol*	\$10.23	\$31	\$35.96	-	\$77.19
CHIS – partial conversion, letter only*	\$11.32	-	\$6.51	-	\$17.83



* Preliminary results

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Results (MHIS)

	Printing, Postage, Incentive Costs per Complete				
	Printing	Pre-incentive	Postage	Post-incentive	Cost per Complete
MHIS – normal protocol	\$6.78	\$10.29	\$23.25	-	\$40.32
MHIS – partial conversion, \$2 pre-incentive + \$10 post-incentive	\$1.51	\$6.10	\$3.54	\$10	\$21.15



Conclusions

- CHIS – Results are puzzling
 - We did not expect a huge increase with the \$10 post-incentive due to having to open the envelope, but certainly did not expect less
- MHIS – visible cash did help
- Overall conversion is much cheaper
- Quicker to obtain completes



Limitations

- Conversion letters were sent in batches after the standard protocol was exhausted
 - Mix of respondents being contacted soon after break off or 2 month later
- Ideal scenario would be to determine a time after break off where a respondent moves to the partial conversion protocol
 - More challenging from an implementation standpoint
 - Impact cost



Future Research

- CHIS study
 - Replicate
 - Do qualitative
- Look at the impact of the timing of the partial conversion letter on the outcome
- Did the level of completion impact the outcome
- Currently in the field with another HIS
- Protocol
 - \$2 visible pre-incentive
 - Experimenting with the amount of post-incentive
 - \$5
 - \$10
- Do the people who break off and resume differ from...
 - those who do not break off?
 - those who despite our efforts do not resume?





Thank you!

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Survey respondents invited by mail to complete a web survey sometimes start a survey but fail to complete it for a variety of reasons, resulting in a breakoff. While some respondents may not be willing to resume due to disapproval of the survey content or a particular question, it is safe to assume that others break off for a variety of other reasons, such as lack of time or loss of interest. Since these respondents read our materials and started the survey initially, we believe that offering incentives may help convert these surveys to completes, at a lower cost than releasing additional sample.

In this presentation, we will delve into experiments that we conducted on two health surveys – the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) and the Massachusetts Health Insurance Survey (MHIS) – for converting partial surveys to completed surveys. Specifically, we will assess the impact of a letter, a pre-incentive, and a promised post-incentive in converting partials to completes.

