

LINKAGE Medicare and Medicaid Summary File

The LINKAGE Medicare and Medicaid Summary Files (LMMSF) is a cleaned, easy-to-use, and streamlined beneficiary-level data product containing information from Medicare and Medicaid programs for the years 1991-present for Medicare and 1999-present for Medicaid. The information included in the LMMSF were selected to include comprehensive data for beneficiary demographics, healthcare utilization and health trajectories over time. All variables are named and derived consistently across years of available Medicare and Medicaid administrative and claims data.

File and Variable Structure: The Beneficiary Annual Health Status Summary File includes five sections, (i) Beneficiary Administrative Information, (ii) Beneficiary Health Status Summary, (iii) Beneficiary Annual Enrollment Data, (iv) Beneficiary Annual Utilization Data, and (v) Beneficiary Health Status by Year. The file provides a continuous framework with observations at the beneficiary-level, with one observation per beneficiary enrolled in either Medicare or Medicaid for all years of available data (1991-present for Medicare and 1999-present for Medicaid). Random Beneficiary IDs (BIDs) identify individual enrollees. Selection of included variables in each observation describe an individual's demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender), monthly enrollment statuses (e.g., Medicare, Medicaid), and indications of health conditions (e.g., chronic conditions, illnesses) applicable across the years. The files are constructed in a wide format inclusive of all years with a single beneficiary per line for ease of tracking each beneficiary over the years of available data.

Individual variables for each component of the LMMSF were selected based on the ability to construct relevant beneficiary data from the spectrum of available data over time. The Beneficiary Administrative Information and Beneficiary Health Status Summary, and Beneficiary Annual Enrollment files were constructed using the Medicare Denominator/Master Beneficiary Summary File (MBSF), Medicaid Enrollment files, and Medicaid Claims data. Beneficiary Annual Utilization Data was constructed using relevant variables from Medicare MBSF Cost and Use (CU) files and Medicaid Claims data. The Beneficiary Health Status file derive beneficiary level data from the MBSF Chronic Conditions (CC) files and Medicaid claims data. The LMMSF are available for the following NIA-funded Studies in the LINKAGE enclave:

- Health and Retirement Study (HRS)
- National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS)
- Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center (RADDC)
- Understanding America Study (UAS)