

life of a contract. Contractor performance information can leverage the use of common contracting events such as option extensions, earned value management discussions, and award fee discussions to populate a Governmentwide database and reduce the reliance on external steps and non-value added processes. As additional value, Government agencies could be encouraged to monitor performance and provide evaluations of other Government agencies performing on Memorandum of Understanding agreements and other interagency agreements. The benefit of this effort will result in a unified method of vendor evaluations.

An Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memorandum dated July 3, 2002 announced that all Federal contractor past performance information currently captured through existing tools would be centrally available on-line for use by all Federal agency contracting officials effective July 1, 2002. A Governmentwide past performance retrieval database supports the Administration's E-Government initiatives to "unify & simplify" and reduce burden by eliminating collection redundancies. Performance data is currently collected in the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS), which is a web-enabled, Governmentwide application. Two of the collection tools have been eliminated: Past Performance Information Management System (PPIS) and Architect-Engineer Contract Administration Support System (ACAAS). Other collection systems are positioned to be turned off in the next year. However, it was determined by senior procurement executives that a lack of widespread use resulted in insufficient information in the Governmentwide shared database. A review of how to streamline the collection of data, simplify the evaluations of vendors, and improve the value of the data in the Governmentwide database was requested.

In a memorandum, OMB's Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) established a working group to re-visit the regulations, policies, and business considerations associated with contractor performance information.

During this tasking, the working group reviewed some of the thresholds and made the following recommendations:

- The contractor performance information be removed from the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Part 36 and moved to FAR Subpart 42.15 so that all of the contractor

performance information is in one location in the FAR.

- Removed the reference "past" from contractor performance information. Evaluating contractor performance is encouraged throughout the life of the contract, not just a completed contract. As such, it is useful both as an evaluation factor in awards and as a tool to encourage continuous outstanding performance.

- Removed duplications in the FAR guidance.

- Clarified the guidance relating to contractor performance information.

- Revisited and discussed the different feeder and retrieval systems.

The working group has prepared proposed language for the FAR and has updated OFPP's guide "Best Practices for Collecting and Using Current and Past Performance Information" (June 2002) incorporating the Department of Defense's (DOD), Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology & Logistics (Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy) guide, "A Guide to Collection and Use of Past Performance Information" (Version 3 May 2003).

OFPP's current guide was a joint effort of agency procurement and program officials and representatives from the private sector. The techniques and practices used to implement the current and past performance initiatives that are discussed in the OFPP best practices guide are not mandatory regulatory guidance. They are useful examples of techniques for recording and using contractor performance to better assess contracts and to enhance the source selection process.

DOD's guide was a joint effort by members from the DOD Past Performance Integrated Product Team. The Team's purpose was to serve as a practical reference tool regarding the DOD past performance policy. It was designed to articulate the key techniques and practices for the use and collection of past performance information for use by the entire acquisition workforce in both Government and industry. It explains best practices for the use of past performance information during the periods of source selection, ongoing performance, and collection of information.

The new guide is entitled "Contractor Performance in the Acquisition Process" and can be accessed at <http://www.acquisition.gov>. It also is a joint effort of Federal agency and DOD procurement and program officials. In an effort to continue to solicit private sector input, it is distributed for public comment. This guide is designed to help

agencies know their role in addressing and using contractor performance information. It addresses the types of performance information that exist, resources for finding the data, and standards to employ. It discusses best use of performance data throughout the acquisition process, from the pre-award and planning phase, through source selection, and into contract evaluation.

The proposed FAR rule reflecting the findings of this tasking is currently being processed by the FAR team and will be issued for comment at a later date.

Dated: November 7, 2006.

Teresa Sorrenti,

Director, Office of Acquisition Systems.

[FR Doc. E6-19392 Filed 11-15-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6820-61-S

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[30Day-07-0595]

Agency Forms Undergoing Paperwork Reduction Act Review

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publishes a list of information collection requests under review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35). To request a copy of these requests, call the CDC Reports Clearance Officer at (404) 639-5960 or send an e-mail to omb@cdc.gov. Send written comments to CDC Desk Officer, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC or by fax to (202) 395-6974. Written comments should be received within 30 days of this notice.

Proposed Project

Performance Evaluation Program for Rapid HIV Testing—Revision—National Center for Health Marketing (NCHM), Coordinating Center for Health Information and Service (CoCHIS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Background and Brief Description

To support our mission of improving public health and preventing disease through continuously improving laboratory practices, the Model Performance Evaluation Program (MPEP), Division of Laboratory Systems, Coordinating Center for Health Information and Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention intends to continue the currently ongoing HIV

rapid testing performance evaluation program (HIV Rapid Testing MPEP). This program offers external performance evaluation (PE) for rapid tests such as the OraQuick® Rapid HIV-1 Antibody Test, approved as a waived test by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and for other licensed tests such as the MedMira Reveal®. Participation in PE programs is expected to lead to improved HIV testing performance because participants have the opportunity to identify areas for improvement in testing practices. Participants include facilities and testing sites that perform HIV Rapid Testing. This program helps to ensure accurate testing as a basis for

development of HIV prevention and intervention strategies.

This external quality assessment program is made available at *no cost* (for receipt of sample panels) to sites performing rapid testing for HIV antibodies. This program offers laboratories/testing sites an opportunity for:

- (1) Assuring that the laboratories/testing sites are providing accurate tests through external quality assessment,
- (2) Improving testing quality through self-evaluation in a nonregulatory environment,
- (3) Testing well characterized samples from a source outside the test kit manufacturer,

(4) Discovering potential testing problems so that laboratories/testing sites can adjust procedures to eliminate them,

(5) Comparing individual laboratory/testing site results to others at a national and international level, and

(6) Consulting with CDC staff to discuss testing issues.

Participants in the MPEP HIV Rapid Testing program are required to complete a laboratory practices questionnaire survey annually. In addition, participants are required to submit results twice/year after testing mailed performance evaluation samples. There is no cost to respondents other than their time. The estimated annualized burden is 625.

ESTIMATED ANNUALIZED BURDEN HOURS

| Form name | Number of respondents | Number of responses per respondent | Average burden per response (in hours) |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| HIV Rapid Testing Laboratory Practices Questionnaire | 750 | 1 | 30/60 |
| HIV Rapid Testing Form EZ | 750 | 2 | 10/60 |

Dated: November 9, 2006.

Joan F. Karr,
Acting Reports Clearance Officer, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[FR Doc. E6-19369 Filed 11-15-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4163-18-P

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[30Day-07-0222]

Agency Forms Undergoing Paperwork Reduction Act Review

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publishes a list of information collection requests under review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35). To request a copy of these requests, call the CDC Reports Clearance Officer at (404) 639-5960 or send an e-mail to omb@cdc.gov. Send written comments to CDC Desk Officer, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC or by fax to (202) 395-6974. Written comments should be received within 30 days of this notice.

Proposed Project

Questionnaire Design Research Laboratory (QDRL) 2007-2009, (OMB

No. 0920-0222)—Extension—National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Background and Brief Description

The Questionnaire Design Research Laboratory (QDRL) conducts questionnaire pre-testing and evaluation activities for CDC surveys (such as the NCHS National Health Interview Survey, OMB No. 0920-0214) and other federally sponsored surveys. The QDRL conducts cognitive interviews, focus groups, mini field-pretests, and experimental research in laboratory and field settings, both for applied questionnaire evaluation and more basic research on response errors in surveys.

In a cognitive interview, a questionnaire design specialist interviews a volunteer participant. QDRL participants are usually recruited by expressing their personal willingness to participate. They read or hear about the study through media advertisements, flyers, and word-of-mouth, and either call the laboratory answering machine number or contact a person coordinating the recruitment. Thus, participation is strictly voluntary and participants are not chosen randomly.

The most common questionnaire evaluation method is the cognitive interview. The interviewer administers the draft survey questions as written,

but also probes the participant in depth about interpretations of questions, recall processes used to answer them, and adequacy of response categories to express answers, while noting points of confusion and errors in responding. Interviews are generally conducted in small rounds of 10-15 interviews; ideally, the questionnaire is re-worked between rounds and revisions are tested interactively until interviews yield relatively few new insights. When possible, cognitive interviews are conducted in the survey's intended mode of administration. For example, when testing telephone survey questionnaires, participants often respond to the questions via a telephone in a laboratory room. Under this condition, the participant answers without face-to-face interaction. QDRL staff watch for response difficulties from an observation room, and then conduct a face-to-face debriefing with in-depth probes. Cognitive interviewing provides useful data on questionnaire performance at minimal cost and respondent burden. Similar methodology has been adopted by other Federal agencies, as well as by academic and commercial survey organizations. NCHS is requesting 3 years of OMB Clearance for the project. There are no costs to respondents other than their time. The total estimated annualized burden hours are 600.