Quick Notes

Access to Safe, Quality Healthcare Environments that
Meet California's Dynamic and Diverse Needs
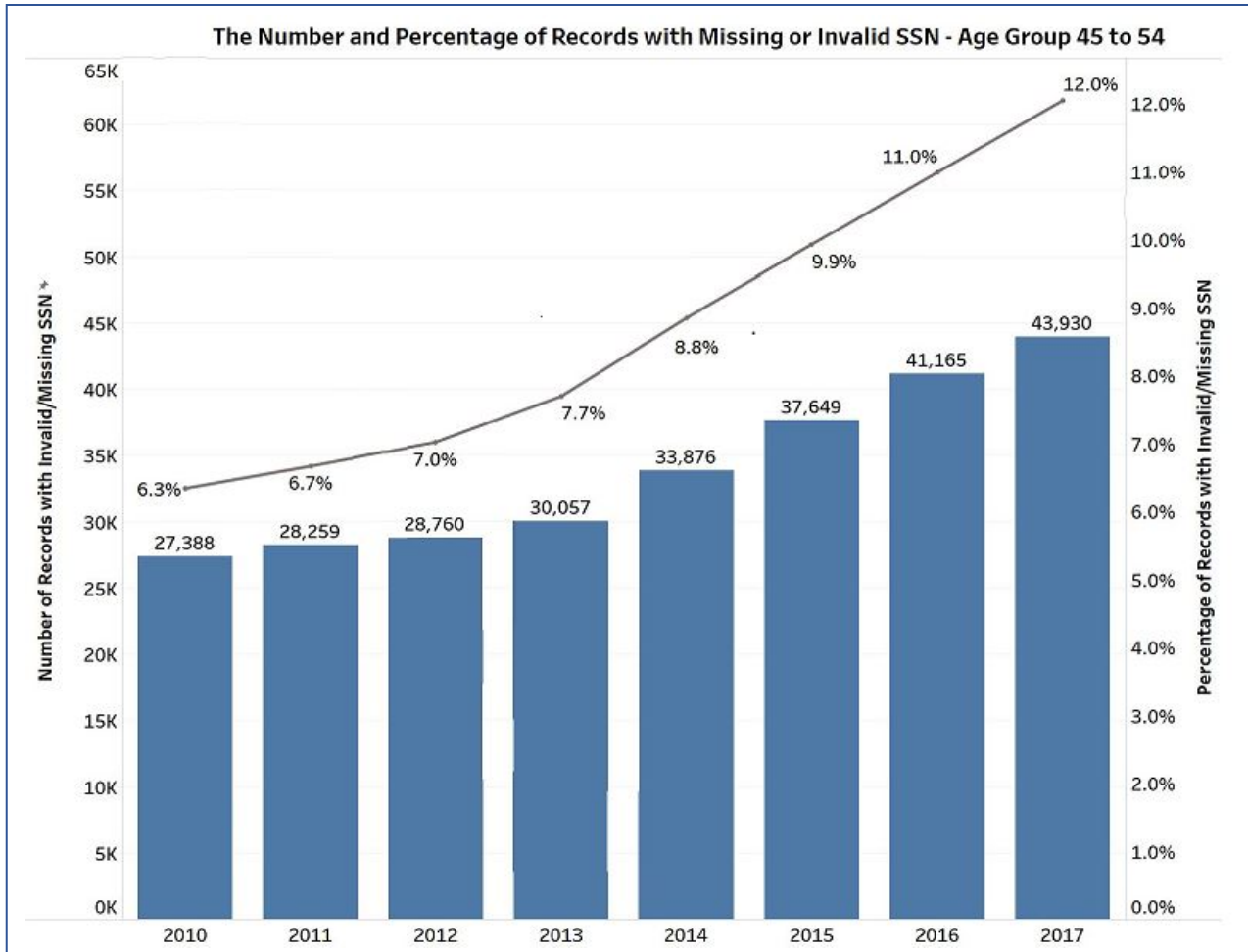
Issue No. 53   *February 26, 2019*

IP Inpatient Discharges   **ED** Emergency Department   **AS** Ambulatory Surgery

Health Data Research at Risk

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of records reported to OSHPD without a valid Social Security Number (SSN). The issue applies to all age categories, with the exception of children under the age of 1. Of noteworthy concern is the age group 45-54 in which unreported SSNs have increased from 6.3% to 12.0% in just 7 years as illustrated in the graph below.

The Number and Percentage of Records with Missing or Invalid SSN - Age Group 45 to 54

Year	Number of Records	Percentage
2010	27,388	6.3%
2011	28,259	6.7%
2012	28,760	7.0%
2013	30,057	7.7%
2014	33,876	8.8%
2015	37,649	9.9%
2016	41,165	11.0%
2017	43,930	12.0%

Patient data is submitted through a secure encrypted connection and when OSHPD receives the data, the SSN is encrypted into a Record Linkage Number (RLN). This number is used to identify multiple encounters for the same patient over time. OSHPD releases only aggregated data to the public and RLNs are not released in published materials.

Research at Risk (continued)

OSHPD and other researchers have used the RLNs to observe readmission trends, track Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus (MRSA) infections, and follow patient outcomes for Coronary Artery Bypass Graft surgeries, amongst other important research studies. Lacking the ability to reliably track these trends significantly hinders efforts to identify potential issues and improve healthcare delivery.

The California Health and Safety Code, Sections 128735, 128736, and 128737, requires a Social Security Number to be reported if it is contained in the patient's medical record. OSHPD encourages facilities to develop action plans to improve SSN data collection. OSHPD offers a Personal Data brochure that includes helpful material when speaking to patients on the importance of providing personal information.

Accurate reporting of SSNs is crucial for monitoring and improving the healthcare of all Californians. OSHPD understands that there may be occurrences when SSNs are difficult to obtain or not available in the medical record, but we appreciate facilities' continued efforts to report this vital data.

Penalty Appeals
New Process

OSHPD has recently updated the penalty appeal and hearing process. If you receive a Notice of Penalty and would like to submit an appeal, you must request an Administrative Hearing. All hearings will be held in Sacramento at OSHPD unless the Hearing Officer plans to conduct it by telephone or other electronic means. For more information on penalty appeal and hearing procedures, please see OSHPD's Administrative Hearing Office webpage.

New 2019 Data Requirements in Effect
Submit Early!

Beginning in April, ED and AS data for quarter one will be the first 2019 data files submitted under the new reporting and file format requirements. The first Inpatient submissions will begin in July.

Data reminders

- For ED and AS, facilities should ensure the files include total charges for each encounter.

- Beginning January 1st, your facility should have begun allowing patients the option to declare up to 5 races.

- IP Race and Ethnicity categories now align with ED/AS.

- ED and AS ZIP Code values now align with IP. 99999 should no longer be reported and will flag as invalid.

File Format Testing

The MIRCal File Format Testing feature is available to check data files for the correct format. This feature does not run the data through any of the other edit programs. The link is found towards the bottom of the MIRCal Main Menu. Historically, many facilities encounter transmittal errors when there is a file format change. We recommend testing your file format in advance and beginning the submission process as soon as the report period opens.

Please see the following for more information regarding the changes:
- Quick Notes 49, 50, and 52
- Reporting Manuals
- Regulations
- Format and File Specifications for IP and ED/AS