QUALITY ASSURANCE – GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are concerned with the quality of the estimates being produced from the microdata file. Because the results of some tabulations might not meet minimum quality requirements, care must be exercised in the use and interpretation of the estimates.

While the user should refer to the full documentation for more in-depth information, here are a few items to keep in mind:

1. In calculating your estimates, always use the weight field **WTSC_M**. The CCHS is a sample survey. The sampling rate varies across the country, and the weights vary accordingly.

2. Remember that the weights are designed to provide population estimates of persons living in households. The weights do not reflect the number of households. There are no household weights on the file.

3. Always run your tabulations both unweighted and weighted. If the number of sampled respondents who contribute to the calculation of the estimate (unweighted count) is less than 30, the weighted estimate should not be released.

4. Keep in mind the following general rule concerning the coefficient of variation (CV):
   - a CV from 0.0 to 16.5% indicates that the estimate is most probably of good quality, with an acceptable degree of variability;
   - a CV from 16.6 to 33.3% reflects a marginal estimate that should be interpreted accordingly and identified as such in any publication;
   - a CV greater than 33.3% indicates an estimate of poor quality that should not be considered for publication, or should be strongly qualified if used.

Approximate CV look-up tables are provided as an appendix to the user guide. Please refer to the full documentation for further information.

5. When publishing totals, it is recommended to round the figures to the closest hundred, or to the closest thousand if the figures are large enough. Publishing an exact, unrounded total provides a false sense of accuracy about the data.

6. For the same reason, published ratios or proportions should be rounded to no more than one decimal point.