

2004 Independent Population Estimates

Dr. Kenneth G. Manton, Principal Investigator of the National Long Term Care Survey (NLTC) has expressed concern with the independent estimates used to create the second stage factors for the Census Bureau's 2004 NLTC screener and detail weight.¹ The second-stage factors represent ratio adjustments used to correct for the difference between weighted sample counts of persons and independent estimates of the total number of persons, within certain defined cells. The independent estimates or "population controls" appearing in the Census Bureau's weighting document are based on Census Bureau projections from the 2000 Decennial Census of Population and Housing.

Of chief concern to Dr. Manton is the Census Bureau's institutional population estimate of 1,624,379.² This estimate does not reflect the trend in elderly housing away from nursing homes to other housing alternatives such as assisted living communities, retirement communities, or the alternative of the elderly remaining in their own home and opting for home health care to accommodate their health needs. Data from the 2004 National Nursing Home Survey (NNHS) released in July 2006, substantiate Dr. Manton's position. Although formal reports and findings are forthcoming, these data are available on-line. We were able to access these data to estimate the 65 year old and older nursing home population to be 1,316,205.³ Using the 2004 NLTC data, Dr. Manton estimates the institutional population at 1,480,776.

It is important to note the nursing home population is by far the major component, but not the only component of the NLTC institutional definition. The NLTC institutional definition also includes people who are living in assisted living facilities, congregate care facilities, or continuing care retirement communities and who receive substantial nursing care. It also includes households of three unrelated people who have daily access to professional medical care. Given this, we would expect the NLTC institutional count to be higher than the NNHS count. Please refer to the 2004 NLTC weighting specification for a full discussion of the NLTC institutional definition.⁴

Finally, Dr. Manton expressed similar concerns with the population controls provided in drafts of the Census Bureau's 1999 weighting specification. Among his concerns, Dr. Manton thought the institutional population provided by the Census Bureau was too high. In lieu of the Census Bureau's independent estimates, Dr. Manton developed alternative population estimates for use in calculating the second stage factors used in the weighting process. Dr. Manton's approach was reviewed by Census Bureau statisticians who found that Dr. Manton's NLTC institutional estimates were supported by estimates from the 1999 National Nursing Home Survey.⁵

¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census (2006). "2004 National Long Term Care Survey: Weighting Specifications for Cross Sectional Estimates," October 31, 2006, Appendix E,

² Census (2006)

³ <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nnhs.htm>

⁴ Census (2006) pp.27,28.

⁵ Tupek, Alan R., "Results of the Census Bureau Review of the Adjusted 1999 National Long Term Care Survey' (NLTC) Second Stage Ratio Estimates," May 18, 2006.