LONG TERM FOLLOW-UP OF MDRC STUDIES

“Learning from Administrative Records” Initiative

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Background about MDRC

• Non-partisan, non-profit research organization
• Started in 1974
• Pioneered the use of random assignment in this setting
• Early focus on Welfare to work studies and demonstrations
• Current work across domains
Roots of the LAD initiative

• Approached by academics interested in MDRC studies

• Partnership:
  – Access to federal data sources
  – Study sample information

• Initial group: 2 youth-focused studies, 3-5 Welfare-to-Work studies
Rationale

• Promising short term findings from studies

• Focus on administrative records and federal data sources

• Long term interest in programs and policies
Internal process created

- Identify sites & data sources
- Review study sample data availability
- Identify potential legal and IRB issues
- Work through legal and IRB issues
- Create and review analysis plan
- Match study sample
- Perform analyses
- Disseminate findings
Challenges: Protecting Human Subjects

- Review original consent form language (if applicable)
- Considerations for waiver of consent
- Level of risk evaluated
- Potential benefits assessed
- Review data sharing agreements
Challenges: Legal

- Review original data sharing agreements and contracts for studies
- Negotiate new data sharing agreements
- Funding agreements
Challenges: Resources!

• An incredibly time-intensive process
• Foundation funding has been key, to date:
  – Smith Richardson
  – Russell Sage Foundation
  – Arnold Ventures
Advantages

• **MDRC staff**
  – Connect original and current research
  – Know data and analysis issues
  – Act as reviewers or part of team

• **Existence of Public Use Files**
  – Accessible study data
  – Can compliment sample identifiers in analyses
Accomplishments to date

- First study sample matched and sitting at Census!
- Analysis plan and sample data ready for a youth study
- 30+ year old data sharing agreement renegotiated
- Gained knowledge throughout about how to address and identify IRB concerns
Contact

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