VA INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER

DATA ISSUES BRIEF   **JUNE 2008**
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VA DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS:

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1. DSS Plans to Change Extraction Method for All LAR Records in FY09 to Pull by LOINC Code
The Decision Support Office plans to add Logical Observation Identifiers Names and Codes (LOINC) to all Lab Results (LAR) National Data Extracts (NDEs) in fiscal year 2009 (FY09). This addition will change the LAR NDEs extraction process to select by LOINC codes. LOINC codes are universal identifiers for laboratory and other clinical observations that address the problem of exchanging and pooling results among institutions with internal, idiosyncratic code values. LOINC codes incorporate specimen source and methodology information so that multiple specimen sources for a lab require multiple LOINC codes. Incorporation of these codes will address the specimen source problem described on the VIReC Web site http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesCategory/DataQuality/Lab.htm. VIReC will report the forthcoming details on changes to the Decision Support System (DSS) LAR NDEs in future *Data Issues Briefs* (*DIB*).
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2. New Religion Codes
The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Information (OI) has released a Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) patch adding 52 new religion codes along with revised descriptions for 7 codes. Details can be found on the NPCD VA Intranet Audit Trail of Changes Website (address given in the VA Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief*). The 52 new religion codes are enumerated in the new religion codes section under attachments.
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3. AITC Implements Changes to Race and Ethnicity Variables in SAS Format Library
The Austin Information Technology Center (AITC) has implemented changes to the race and ethnicity variables in the SAS format library. These variables will now include a modifier value to incorporate collection source information. This is different from VistA where Race and Ethnicity variables do not include collection source. The collection source modifier values are: (1) O = observer collection, (2) P = proxy collection, (3) S = self-collection, and (4) U = unknown identifier collection. However, a single letter will indicate missing race and missing ethnicity values: D for missing race and U for missing ethnicity. More information about these changes is on the National Patient Care Database (NPCD) VA Intranet Audit Trail of Changes Web site (address given in the VA Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief*).

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EDUCATION:

4. June Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminar
John Fortney, PhD is presenting a cyber seminar on Tuesday, June 17 entitled "NetDSS: Facilitating Implementation of a Depression Management Intervention Protocol Using Web-based Decision Support." Dr. Fortney is Associate Director for Research of the South Central Mental Illness Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) and a core investigator with the VA Center for Mental Health and Outcomes Research in Little Rock AR. He is also a Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and Director of the Division of Health Services Research. Participants are welcome to join the session on a "first come, first serve" basis. The VIReC Cyber Seminars on Clinical Informatics take place at 12 pm ET on the third Tuesday of each month. Information can be found at: http://www.virec.research.va.gov/EducationResources/Seminars/Clinical-Informatics.htm. For further questions contact Joanne Stevens (joanne.stevens@va.gov), VIReC's Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminar Coordinator.

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CONFERENCES:

5. VeHU 2008 in Tampa FL July 14-17
VeHU 2008 will be held this year from July 14-17 in Tampa, Florida. General registration for the conference opened on Monday, April 28. Conference registration is by VA facility teams. Those interested in going should talk with the VeHU coordinator at their facility. Information is available on the VA Intranet (address given in the VA Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief*).

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