



## ***VA Information Resource Center***

### ***Data Issues Brief***

**June 2002**

#### **1. FY2002 Medical SAS Datasets Reflect New VISN**

The Austin Automation Center Enterprise Development office has announced that the FY2002 Medical SAS Datasets now report data for VISN 23, the VA Central Plains Health Network, which resulted from the consolidation of VISNS 13 and 14. For further information about the consolidation, see <http://www.visn23.med.va.gov/Index.asp>. Questions about using the data can be addressed to the AAC Help Desk, 512-326-6780.

#### **2. VHA Handbook for Coding Guidelines Updated**

The *Handbook for Coding Guidelines* Version 2.0, April 26, 2002, replaces the previous version (1.4) dated April 20, 2001. The handbook is available at the VIREC Internet Website (<http://www.virec.research.med.va.gov>). Both the handbook and other Health Information Management (HIM) information are available on the VA Intranet site for the VHA Office of Information, Information Assurance Service, Health Information Management Coding Council.

#### **3. AAC Customer Information Guide Gives Current Contacts**

The Austin Automation Center's Customer Information Guide issued March 2002 provides current contact information for the System Manager of Record and an AAC staff person for each application maintained at the AAC. The Guide is available at the VA Intranet site [REDACTED].

#### **4. End of Fiscal Year 2001 VA Site Tracking Report**

The Planning Systems Support Group (PSSG) of the VHA Office of Policy and Planning has issued the End of Fiscal Year 2001 Report of its VA Site Tracking (VAST) database. The report provides, in tables, graphs, and maps, information on the number and types of VHA facilities nationally and by VISN. For further information, consult the report on the PSSG VA Intranet site [REDACTED] (use link to VAST; PDF for the report takes a while to load).

#### **5. OI Race and Ethnicity Project Approved for Implementation**

Implementation of the VHA Office of Information System Design & Development (SD&D) Race and Ethnicity Project has been activated, and a project plan and schedule are being developed. The project addresses the standards for Federal agencies' collection and use of race and ethnicity data that were issued by the Office of Management and Budget in October

1997. The standards specified five categories for data on race (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White) and two categories for data on ethnicity (Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino). Data collection for both the race and ethnicity fields will be made mandatory, and it is expected that there will be an indicator of how the determination was made (visual or self-identification). The project will have an impact on numerous VA databases. Full information on the Race and Ethnicity Project is available via the VA Intranet; see the Active Project Notebook at <http://tspr.vista.med.va.gov/warboard/portfolio.asp>.

## **6. Nurse Researchers To Meet As New Affiliate Group at AHSRHP**

An Affiliate Meeting of the Working Group on Health Services Research and Nursing will be held on Saturday, June 22, 2002, 7:00-9:00 PM, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Academy of Health Services Research and Health Policy in Washington, DC. The affiliate meeting is open to anyone interested in promoting the use of health services research to study nursing issues. Further information is available at <http://www.academyhealth.org/2002/affiliate/index.htm>.

*Data Issues Briefs* are developed by the staff of the VA Information Resource Center (VIREC) for the purpose of informing and updating VA researchers on current and pending happenings and changes regarding health data, databases, and medical informatics. *Data Issues Briefs* are produced on a monthly basis and are distributed through e-mail subscriptions. Previous releases are posted and available on the VIREC Web site at <http://www.virec.research.med.va.gov>. If you wish to receive future issues directly or have any suggestions or comment about the *Data Issues Briefs*, please send an e-mail message to the VIREC at [virec@research.hines.med.va.gov](mailto:virec@research.hines.med.va.gov) or call (708) 202-2413.