



## ***Data Issues Brief: October 2002***

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### **1. AMA/AHRQ Forum on Clinical Quality Improvement**

The American Medical Association and AHRQ are sponsoring the Clinical Quality Improvement Forum to be held October 30, 2002 at the Chicago Marriott O'Hare. This 1-day forum will allow physicians and others to discuss the issues surrounding the impact of health information technology and electronic medical systems on performance measurement, quality enhancement, and practice management. Forum participants will include physicians, hospitals, health plans, accrediting organizations and other professionals who collect, evaluate, and use data to improve performance and clinical quality. Additional information can be found at <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/3700.html>

### **2. New Summary Reports of DSS National Extract Data Available**

The DSS Program Office is providing pre-defined reports of national data on laboratory tests and radiology tests via the VISN Support Services Center (VSSC) Web site on the VHA Intranet. The reports are in the KLFMenu portion of the Web site.

### **3. New Web Site for DSS Program Office**

The DSS Program Office has a new Web site on the VHA Intranet. Although the site is designed primarily to inform DSS site team managers and members, researchers using DSS data may want to be aware of Program Office documentation, minutes of meetings, announcements of training, and database development issues. VHA Intranet users can link to the new site from the VHA Office of Finance home page.

### **4. VHA Medical Care Co-payments Summarized**

The September 2002 issue of *The Magazine of Ambulatory and Primary Care* includes "VA Medical Care Co-payment in Brief" by Nancy Howard, Program Analyst, Office of Policy and Procedures, VACO, Washington DC. Ms. Howard presents details of the calendar year 2002 co-payments for inpatient, outpatient, medication, and extended care services. This article is just one of interest to health services researchers. See the complete text at:

[REDACTED]

### **5. VA Represented Among Top Innovators in Health Care IT**

Congratulations to Gail L. Graham, RHIA, director of VA Information Assurance, on being named by *Healthcare Informatics* as one of 10 Top Innovators in Health Care IT. The journal's September issue recognized Ms. Graham and the other awardees as people "who exemplify special leadership, business, and creative acumen.." For further information, see <http://www.healthcare-informatics.com/>

## 6. Study Compared VA Administrative vs. Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity Data

An assessment of the quality of VA administrative data on race/ethnicity was reported by Boehmer, U., Kressin, NR, Berlowitz, DR, Christiansen, CR, Kazis, LE, and Jones, JA in "Self-Reported vs Administrative Race/Ethnicity Data and Study Results" (*AJPH* September 2002;92(9):1471-1473). The researchers found, for example, agreement between VA administrative data and survey self-reported data on race/ethnicity to be 76.4-77.1% for Whites, 68.4-68.9 for African Americans, 57.1-61.0% for Hispanics, 33.3-54% for Asians, and 1.4-4.6% for American Indians). Requests for reprints should be addressed to Ulrike Boehmer, PhD; Center for Health Quality, Outcomes, and Economic Research, 200 Sprints Road, Building 70, Bedford, MA 01730 (or e-mail [Boehmer@bu.edu](mailto:Boehmer@bu.edu)).

## 7. Name Change: Academy for Health Services Research and Health Policy

The Academy for Health Services Research and Health Policy (AHSRHP) has formally announced it's new name 'AcademyHealth'. AcademyHealth's new website is: <http://www.academyhealth.org/>

## 8. Comparing Diagnostic Cost Groups and Concurrent Utilization

Amy Rosen, PhD, Center for Health Quality, Outcomes and Economic Research, Bedford VAMC, et.al. recently published the methods paper "Diagnostic Cost Groups (DCG) and Concurrent Utilization among Patients with Substance Abuse Disorders" (*Health Services Research* August 2002; 37(4): 1079-1103). The group used 1997 VA administrative (inpatient and outpatient) databases for the source of the data.

## 9. New Adjusted Clinical Group SAS Datasets Now Available at the Austin Automation Center

SAS datasets covering the fiscal years 2000 and 2001 showing the Adjusted Clinical Groups (ACG) (formerly Ambulatory Care Groups) classifications, the Johns Hopkins University Case-Mix risk adjustment classification system, of the veteran patient population are now available at the Austin Automation Center. The ACG system, which assigns up to 106 sub-population categories of similar morbidity, also produces two additional multivariate assignments, the Adjusted Diagnosis Group (ADG), 34 clinical categories of diagnoses, and the Expanded Diagnostic Cluster (EDC), 200 groupings of diagnoses in disease categories. Two SAS datasets for each fiscal year will carry these assignments, the Adjusted Clinical Group (ACG) dataset (MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.ACG.FYyy.ACGASMT (where yy=fiscal year)) and the Expanded Diagnostic Cluster (EDC) dataset (MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.ACG.FYyy.EDC (where yy=fiscal year)). For more information on the John Hopkins University ACG Case-Mix system you can visit their website at <http://www.acg.jhsph.edu>. For more specific information on the SAS datasets please contact VIREC.

*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.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.va.gov](mailto:virec@research.hines.va.gov) or call (708) 202-2413.