



1. DSS Medical Records Technical Documentation Manual

The FY2004 DSS Medical Record Book, technical documentation for the DSS National Data Extracts, was published in December 2003. It contains specific information on how DSS Medical encounter records are built for both inpatients and outpatients, and it will be useful to DSS users in identifying criteria to select DSS records of unique populations. The manual is available on the VA Intranet DSS Web site at [REDACTED].

2. DSS SAS National Laboratory Results Data To Be Available for FY2001

The first DSS National Data Extract for laboratory results was done in August, 2003. Now all of 2003 and 2002 laboratory results are in the DSS SAS LAR files in Austin. DSS plans to make FY2001 lab results data in March 2004. The availability of three years of national lab results data will facilitate longitudinal research. Information about requesting access to DSS National Data Extracts is on the VA Intranet at [REDACTED] or by contacting the VIREC Help Desk at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov>.

3. New HIPAA Privacy Rule Information for Clinical Researchers

On February 5, 2004, the National Institutes of Health posted "Clinical Research and the HIPAA Privacy Rule" (NIH Publication 04-5495) on its Web site http://privacyruleandresearch.nih.gov/clin_research.asp. The posting includes an extensive section of Frequently Asked Questions, and the full document is available for download as a PDF file.

4. AMIA Conference on Implementation of Electronic Medical Records

The American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) has announced its 2004 Spring Congress conference "Practical Strategies for Implementing Electronic Health Records," April 28-29, 2004, in the metropolitan Washington, DC, area. The conference has been developed to assist healthcare executives, senior managers, and implementation teams who are currently implementing, or soon will be implementing, electronic health record (EHR) systems. VA will be featured and research use of EHR will also be a topic of the conference. For further information, see the AMIA Web site at <http://www.amia.org> or call the AMIA office at (301) 657-1291.

5. VA InfoSec Conference June 21, 2004

Cyber security is a high priority within the VA to assure that information systems can support the VA's missions, including databases and warehouses designed for specific research purposes. During the week of June 21, 2004, the DVA will hold its annual VA InfoSec Conference in Atlanta. The conference theme is "If Not Us, Who? If Not Now, When?" The meeting is for Information Security Officers and their alternates, Privacy Officers, system administrators, and all staff members with significant responsibilities in cyber and information security. Conference details and online registration are on the VA Intranet at [REDACTED].

6. New Details About VA Information Technology Conference August 9-12, 2004

Attendees at the Information Technology Conference (ITC) August 9-12, 2004, are being urged to make their hotel reservations now! The call for papers and exhibits will be issued March 8. Conference planners have announced these and other details on the ITC Intranet Web site at

[\[REDACTED\]](#).

7. 2003 National QUERI Meeting Presentations Addressing Data and Informatics Issues

The PowerPoint slides for the VIREC facilitated sessions at the 2003 national meeting of the VHA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) have been posted on the VIREC Web site. Slides for *Data Resources, Privacy, and Security: Things You Need To Know* and *Informatics Strategies to Support Healthcare Quality Improvement* are available under "VIREC News" on the homepage at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/> and on the QUERI Members Area of the QUERI Web site at <http://www.hsrp.research.va.gov/queri/>.

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