



1. FY2005 DSS Identifiers and Three-Tier Co-payment Rates for Outpatient Services

VHA has established a three-tier co-payment for outpatient services with VHA Directive 2004-062, "Implementation Of Changes For Co-Payments For Outpatient Medical Care Provided to Veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs," issued November 3, 2004. The directive specifies the DSS Identifiers (stop codes) to be used for FY2005 and the co-payments, if any, for each. For full information, see the directive at http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1191.

2. Directive on "VHA Site Tracking (VAST) System"

Policy on use and management of the VHA Site Tracking System, known as VAST, is delineated in VHA Directive 2004-060 issued October 28, 2004. The directive describes the processes and division of labor among offices by which the VAST System is to function. Official definitions of various facility types (e.g., VA hospital, Vet Center, CBOC, etc.) are provided in appendices. The directive is available at http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1184.

3. VHA Issues Operating Procedures for Use of VA Medicare Data

VHA Directive 2004-063, "Operating Procedures for the Management of Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Data," was issued November 3, 2004. It formalizes the role VIReC has been playing for the past year in the VA Medicare Data Merge Initiative as the unique manager and distributor for VA-Medicare linked data files to VA researchers. It also formalizes the designation of an Oversight Team formed by the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health (ADUSH) to ensure data security and compliance with policies and regulations regarding use of the data. For information on VA-Medicare data for researchers see the VIReC Web site at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/VA-MedicareData/VA-Medicare.htm>. For the full text of the directive see http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1190.

4. Fact Sheets on Health_eVet and MyHealth_eVet

The VHA Office of Information has issued two fact sheets to provide a basic overview of the Health_eVet strategy and products. The fact sheets are entitled "Vista—Health_eVet Vista—MyHealth_eVet: What's The Difference?" and "What Is The Health_eVet Strategy?" They are available on the VA Intranet at [REDACTED].

5. New Issue of "Data Warehouse/Data Marts Newsletter"

The VHA Health Information Architecture (HIA) office has issued the October 2004 (Vol. 4) *Data Warehouse/Data Marts Newsletter*. Among topics covered by articles are the Meta Data Registry, the Financial & Clinical Data Mart, the past year's activities of the HIA staff. See the VHA Intranet posting of the newsletter under "Announcements" at [REDACTED].

6. New Issue of “DSS Matters” Newsletter

Among topics addressed in the VHA Decision Support Office’s “DSS Matters” newsletter for October-November 2004 are plans for the 2005 DSS Users Conference “Turning Information Into Insight,” changes in DSS for FY2005, and a discussion of DSS workload information. See the DSS Intranet Web site posting at [REDACTED].

7. AcademyHealth Issues Call for Abstracts

January 14, 2005, is the deadline for submission of abstracts for the AcademyHealth National Research Meeting to be held June 26-28 in Boston. The 17 themes around which presentations will be organized include many of interest to VA researchers—e.g., Behavioral Health, Chronic Care, Disparities, Gender and Health, and Translating Research Into Policy and Practice. Full information about the conference and the call for abstracts is available at <http://www.academyhealth.org/arm/>.

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