

VIREC UPDATES:

1. VIREC's Internet Website Address Has Changed

Please update your Bookmarks to the new VIREC Internet website address:

<http://www.virec.research.va.gov/>. Users of the VIREC Internet and VA Intranet sites will notice that we have converted to the VHA "look and feel." Users should also note that some information formerly found on the Internet site can now only be found on the Intranet site. We encourage users to inquire about VPN access at their local VA site for VA Intranet access from university-based locations. Contact your local IRM department or your department's ADPAC to request VPN access.

VA DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS:

2. Report on 2005 Survey of Veterans from the VA Office of the ADUSH for Policy and Planning

The VA Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health (ADUSH) for Policy and Planning has published the "2005 Survey of Veteran Enrollees' Health and Reliance upon VA with Selected Comparisons to the 1999–2002 Surveys" on the VA Intranet (address given in the Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief*). The purpose of the VHA Survey of Enrollees is to provide information that is incorporated into annual VHA projections of enrollment, utilization, and expenditures. The survey was first conducted in Fiscal Year 1999. It provides critical information about the veterans VHA serves: demographic characteristics; other eligibilities and resources; health status and need for care; and self-reported utilization of VA and Non-VA care.

3. Reassignment of ADUSH Monthly Enrollment File to New Austin Automation Center Name Space

The Austin Automation Center (AAC) moved the SAS-formatted ADUSH Enrollment files from the RMTPRD.R101REN name space to a new MDPPRD name space. The AAC is housing the historical data files beginning with data in 2000 in the new name space. The move was effective August 24, 2006. VIREC incorporated the name space change in the newly published ADUSH Monthly Enrollment File Research User Guide 1999-2006 available at the VIREC Internet: <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/>.

4. Encounter Data Available at AAC for Inpatients Who Receive Outpatient Services

Inpatient Encounter (IE) files are available at the AAC with data starting in FY2005. The outpatient encounters documented in this file (e.g., EKG, MRI, Social Work Services, ultrasound, etc.) are for patients seen in one of the VHA outpatient clinics while they have an inpatient status. The file uses VistA "inpatient status" of acute care, extended care, observation care, or non-VA care status to select encounters to include. The Outpatient Encounters (SE) files exclude services that are included in the IE files. Although VistA assigns these patients inpatient status, the IE files use CPT codes because patients receive services at outpatient clinic stops. The AAC file is "MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.IEyy" where "yy" refers to the two-digit year. The file sorts the encounter records by SCRSSN, VIZDAY, and STA6A.

5. New DSS Reports

The August-September 2006 issue of *DSS Matters* issued by the Decision Support Office describes two new Decision Support System reports now available. “Geriatric Primary Care: Workload, Utilization and Cost” was added 7/6/06, as was “Telehealth Workload.” VA researchers can access *DSS Matters* on the VA Intranet (address given in the Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief*).

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

6. Database and Methods Cyber Seminar Series

Todd Lee, PharmD, PhD, will be speaking at the October Database and Methods Cyber Seminar Series on October 3: “Using VA Pharmacy Data.” Dr. Lee is a senior investigator in the Midwest Center for Health Services and Policy Research at Hines VA Hospital and a senior scientific advisor for VIREC. In addition, he holds academic appointments at the Institute for Healthcare Studies and the Division of General Internal Medicine in the Department of Medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Dr. Lee is also an adjunct assistant professor at the Center for Pharmacoeconomic Research and the Department of Pharmacy Practice at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Pharmacy.

The Cyber Seminars on Databases and Methods, sponsored by VIREC, take place at 1 pm ET on the first Tuesday of each month. Interested parties should go to <https://hsrdtraining.webex.com/>. Participants are welcome to join the session on a “first come, first serve” basis. For further information, contact Laurel Nevinslong at laurel.nevinslong@va.gov.

7. Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminar Series

Alexander Young, MD, MSHS will be speaking at the October Cyber Seminar on October 17: “Improving Chronic Illness Care: Development of Routine Patient Self-Assessment.” Dr. Young is Director of the Health Services Unit of the Department of Veterans Affairs Desert Pacific Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) and Associate Professor at the UCLA Department of Psychiatry. He is a psychiatrist and health services researcher.

The Cyber Seminars on Clinical Informatics, sponsored by VIREC and the Center of Excellence on Implementing Evidence-Based Practice, take place at 12 pm ET on the third Tuesday of each month. Participants are welcome to join the session on a “first come, first serve” basis.

All previous Database and Methods, and Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminars are available as audio recordings at the Center for Information Dissemination and Education Resources (CIDER) (http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/).

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO DISSEMINATE TO COLLEAGUES! *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 monthly. All issues are available on the VIREC Web site at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/>. If you wish to receive email notification of future issues or have any suggestions or comment about the *Data Issues Briefs*, please send an e-mail message to the VIREC at virec@va.gov or call (708) 202-2413.