VIReC RESEARCHERS' GUIDE TO VA DATA

Data Issues Brief   December 2006

VIReC UPDATES:

1. MDS and OASIS Data Now Available from VIReC

VIReC has obtained new data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for use by VA researchers. The first is the Long Term Care Minimum Data Set (MDS). The MDS is a screening and assessment tool for all patients receiving long term care from a Medicare or Medicaid certified long term care facility. More information on the MDS dataset can be found at http://www.resdac.umn.edu/MDS/index.asp.

The second new dataset is the Home Health Outcome and Assessment Information Set (OASIS). It is a comprehensive assessment for all patients receiving home care from Medicare certified home care agencies. More information on the OASIS dataset can be found at http://www.resdac.umn.edu/OASIS/Index.asp.

Both MDS and OASIS data are currently available from VIReC for calendar years 2001-2003. Data for calendar year 2004 are expected in early 2007. These new data are available for both veterans and non-veterans. Researchers interested in requesting access to these data can follow the same process as requesting Medicare data from VIReC: http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/VA-MedicareData/DataRequest/Procedure.htm. For more information on requesting these data from VIReC, contact Kristin Koelling at Kristin.Koelling@va.gov.

VA DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS*:*

2. Final FY06 Runs for Monthly and Quarterly VA DSS NDEs

The VA Decision Support System (DSS) conducts monthly or quarterly cumulative runs for its National Data Extracts (NDEs) throughout the fiscal year. DSS runs the final reports for the year in December. The final monthly or quarterly NDEs are cumulative for the entire year.

DSS is scheduled to make final runs for the quarterly clinical NDEs on December 22. DSS quarterly clinical NDEs include laboratory tests (LAB), laboratory test results (LAR), pharmacy (PHA), and radiology (RAD). VIReC provides Research User Guides for these datasets at the VIReC website.

3. VA DSS Offers New Views of Data Contained in NDE TRT

DSS reports a significant enhancement for FY2007 by propagating the TRT file format into three new files; WARD, RAI, and OBS.

The new NDE TRT will be identical to the old except for the elimination of WARD fields.

The new NDE WARD will contain the same cost fields as NDE TRT but split inpatient encounters into ward segments rather than treating specialty. DSS will provide NDE WARD on a quarterly basis.

3. VA DSS Offers New Views of Data Contained in NDE TRT (continued)

The NDE RAI will be generated only for nursing home care unit (NHCU) encounters with cost fields from NDE TRT and encounters split into Resident Assessment Instrument (RAI) score segments. The NDE RAI will be provided quarterly.

DSS is creating the new NDE OBS file for researchers who wish to analyze observation cases as inpatient encounters. The NDE OBS file will contain all observation encounters in the NDE TRT format. As in the past, observation encounters will also be contained in the NDE OutPat. Researchers will have to be careful not to double-count these encounters.

4. VHA Directives Define Policy for the Primary Care Management Module

VHA Directives 2006-059 and 2006-069 both address policy for the Primary Care Management Module (PCMM). Directive 2006-0059 establishes a standard set of rules for activation and inactivation of patients in primary care panels in PCMM. The PCMM software assigns patients to Primary Care Providers (PCPs) as part of the management of outpatient primary care. PCPs manage the overall care provided to the majority of veterans in the VA health care system and are a key factor in governing the total number of patients that can be cared for in the system. In order to manage VHA efficiently, ensure timely access, and provide quality care, it is important that VHA be able to quantify the primary care capacity and current primary care workload so that demand and supply can be aligned.

VHA Directive 2006-060 defines policy for requiring that VHA primary care practices enter data into the PCMM about PCP and Associate Provider (AP) resources using a standardized approach. Information about both directives can be found on the Internet at
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/publications.cfm?pub=1.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

5. Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminar January 16, 2007

Amy Cohen, Ph.D., will present on January 16 "CHIACC: Creating HealtheVet Informatics Applications for Collaborative Care." Dr. Cohen is a clinical psychologist and a health services core investigator at the VISN 22 Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) and Sepulveda VA HSR&D Center of Excellence (COE).   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. Interested parties should go to
http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/catalog.cfm. 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.

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

6. VHA eHealth University Call for Presentation Proposals

The VHA's eHealth University (VeHU) has announced a call to submit presentation proposals for the next meeting to be held in the summer of 2007. Instructions for submissions can be found on the VA Intranet (address given in the Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief*). Submissions must be received by December 21, 2006. Previous VeHU meetings have been an opportunity to meet with VA Office of Information staff to discuss and learn about various new and planned information technology

implementation efforts in VHA (e.g., Health Data Repository, MyHealtheVet, etc.). Both presenters and attendees must find funding for their participation and travel.

7. ResDAC To Hold Medicare and Medicaid Data Training in La Jolla CA

The Research Data Assistance Center (ResDAC) will host two upcoming workshops in La Jolla CA directed at users of data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS):   (1) CMS 101: Introduction to the Use of Medicare Data for Research will be held from February 5-7, 2007. This workshop provides important background about the use of Medicare data for researchers. (2) CMS 102: Conducting Research with Medicaid Claims Data will be held from February 19-21, 2007. This course will provide information on the new Medicaid Analytic Extract (MAX) files and tools and resources that support research using Medicaid administrative data. For detailed information about both courses being held in La Jolla go to the ResDAC Web site http://www.resdac.umn.edu/.