

## VA INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER

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**DATA ISSUES BRIEF**

**MAY 2008**

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#### VA DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS:

##### 1. **Incomplete DSS Inpatient Pharmacy Data**

A recent communication from the Decision Support Office informs researchers of a problem affecting some inpatient data in DSS pharmacy extracts. The automated ward drug dispensing equipment (WDDE) used on some VA inpatient units does not currently communicate with VistA pharmacy files to indicate when drugs have been dispensed. Therefore, DSS does not currently receive records of drugs dispensed through WDDE except in cases where a site has installed local Class III software to work around the situation. VA's Office of Information and Technology (OI&T) is working to correct the problem, but DSS inpatient pharmacy data will continue to be incomplete until an OI&T WDDE Interface is fully implemented. The extent of incompleteness will vary from site to site, depending on the use of WDDE and the use of local work-around software. VIREC has no information on what facilities and wards use WDDE or what facilities have implemented a work-around. It is also not clear whether or not this WDDE problem affects extracts from Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM), but VIREC will report on PBM in a future issue of the Data Issues Brief.

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##### 2. **Nursing Home Care Units Change Name to Community Living Centers**

A memorandum dated April 15, 2008 from the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management announces a name change in extended care facilities formerly called Nursing Home Care

Units (NHCUs). These facilities will now be called Community Living Centers (CLCs). The name change reflects the VA initiative to implement culture transformation by providing resident-centered care in these facilities. The new name also reflects the VA commitment to meet the needs of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans who may need extended care. Development of a new Veterans Health Administration (VHA) handbook promoting resident-centered care for these CLCs is nearing completion. The adoption of the new name across all VHA communication and dissemination will take some time, especially within electronic formats.

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## **EDUCATION:**

### **3. May Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminar**

Charlene R. Weir, RN, PhD is presenting a cyber seminar on Tuesday, May 20 entitled “Information Overload and the Design and Implementation of Computerized Decision Support.” Dr. Weir is Associate Director for Education and Evaluation for the Salt Lake City Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center (GRECC) and is an active researcher in the area of human factors and computers. Participants are welcome to join the session on a “first come, first serve” basis. The Cyber Seminars on Clinical Informatics, sponsored by VIREC, take place at 12 pm ET on the third Tuesday of each month. Information can be found at:

[http://www.hsrp.research.va.gov/for\\_researchers/cyber\\_seminars/catalog.cfm](http://www.hsrp.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/catalog.cfm). For further questions contact Laurel Nevinslong at [laurel.nevinslong@va.gov](mailto:laurel.nevinslong@va.gov).

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## **CONFERENCES:**

### **4. VeHU 2008 in Tampa FL July 14-17**

VeHU 2008 will be held this year from July 14-17 in Tampa, Florida. General registration for the conference opened on Monday, April 28. Registration is via facility teams, so anyone interested in going must talk with the VeHU coordinator at their facility. Information is available on the VA Intranet at <http://www.vehu.va.gov/vehu2008/GeneralInfo/default.cfm>.

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### **5. AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting June 8-10**

The 25<sup>th</sup> AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting is in Washington DC from June 8-10, 2008. The meeting agenda and registration are available online at <http://www.academyhealth.org/arm/>.

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## **RESOURCES**

### **6. Health Care Costs: Standardized Methods and Estimates for Research and Policy Applications**

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) sponsored a meeting in December 2007 entitled “Health Care Costs: Standardized Methods and Estimates for Research and Policy Applications.” Experts at the meeting discussed best practices in measuring health care cost, accessing data and evaluating the economic burden of disease and the net-cost impact of interventions. VA’s Health Economics Resource Center (HERC) is joining forces with NCI and AHRQ to publish a journal supplement presenting the series of papers from this meeting. The goal of the supplement will be to articulate the best approaches for health care cost analysis, in much the same way as the U.S. Panel on Cost-Effectiveness in Health and Medicine did for cost-effectiveness analysis more than a decade ago. The agenda and presentations from the December meeting are available on the Internet at <http://healthservices.cancer.gov/publications/workshops/hcc/agenda.html>.

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### **7. HERC Bulletin Presents Updates**

HERC has issued its April 2008 issue (volume 8, issue 2) of the VA Health Economics Bulletin announcing (1) release of a fiscal year 2006 (FY2006) person-level cost summary, (2) updates to their

technical reports, and (3) new emphasis on their VA Intranet Web site. Investigators can go to [http://www.herc.research.va.gov/news/recent\\_news.asp](http://www.herc.research.va.gov/news/recent_news.asp) to find out about accessing this bulletin.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

### 8. National VA Research Week May 11-17

National VA Research Week takes place this year from May 11-17. This is a week for VA Research and Development (R&D) to exhibit work it is doing to foster patient-centered evidence for clinical care decision-making. The VA's R&D program is designed to take full advantage of its unique position within an integrated health care system with a state-of-the-art electronic health record, and the program serves as a model for conducting superior bench-to-bedside research. VA research includes a full integration of fundamental, clinical, and applied research, which comprehensively addresses veterans' health needs from disease prevention to rehabilitation.

VA's Central Office (VACO) is organizing a special forum this year on May 23 to recognize VA research. Speakers at the forum will include the Secretary for Veterans Affairs, the Under Secretary for Health, and many others. Information will be posted on the VA R&D Web site under Upcoming Events in the near future: <http://www.research.va.gov/default.cfm>.

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- **Data Issues Brief:** is a monthly newsletter published by 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.
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