VIReC RESEARCHERS' GUIDE TO VA DATA

VA INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER

DATA ISSUES BRIEF   November 2008

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1. Copayments for VA Outpatient Medical Care and Extended Care Services Provided to Veterans
Researchers investigating out-of-pocket expenses for veterans may be interested in two recent Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directives:

(a) *VHA Directive 2008-066: Copayment for Outpatient Medical Care Provided to Veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs* (September 30, 2008) includes a table of Decision Support System (DSS) identifiers or stop codes and their corresponding copayment classification, including special health services not subject to copayments. Copayment requirements for Fee Basis Referrals are also described in this directive. Further details can be found at
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1777.

(b) The November 5, 2008, *VHA Directive 2008-076: Copayment for Extended Care Services Provided to Veterans by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)* defines VA policy for charging copayments for extended care services. Long-term care copayment tests must be completed on all veterans in receipt of extended care services. Non-exempt veterans are obligated to pay a monthly extended care copayment based on available resources. *Directive 2008-076* can be found at
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1800.

2. Palliative Care Consult Teams
Researchers investigating issues in end-of life care may be interested in *VHA Directive 2008-066: Palliative Care Consult Teams* (October 23, 2008), which establishes Palliative Care Consult Teams (PCCT), the role of PCCTs at each VHA facility, and the coordination of these teams at the VISN level. Professionals from medicine, nursing, social work, mental health, chaplaincy, and other services comprise the interdisciplinary Palliative Care Consult Teams. The responsibilities of these teams include promoting and disseminating educational expertise to staff members providing end of life care, and ensuring that

24/7 access to core palliative care services is available. For further details, see
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1784.

3. National PBM Drug Safety Alert Distribution
The VHA has issued two directives outlining drug safety alert policies:

(a) *VHA Directive 2008-078: National PBM Drug Safety Alert Distribution* (November17, 2008)
establishes a consistent means of disseminating drug-related safety information from the Food and Drug
Administration (FDA) and other sources to providers and, when appropriate, to patients. According to this
policy, the role of the Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM) Services Office is to develop and
disseminate drug-related communications from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other
credible sources to providers and, as needed, to patients. See
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1804 for further details on directive
2008-072.

(b) *Directive 2008-072: Research Personnel Notification of Pharmacy Benefits Management Drug Safety
Alert and Adverse Drug Events Related to Interventional Human Subject Research Studies* (October 30,
2008) establishes policy and procedures for promptly notifying Research and Development Services of all
VA Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM) Services alerts. These prompt alerts will allow for the
highest level of protection for human research subjects and the timely inclusion of patient or research
subjects' information into the VA Adverse Drug Event Reporting System (VA ADERS) and the FDA
Medwatch System. Directive 2008-075 can be found at
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1792. Researchers may also be
interested in *VHA Directive 2008-059: Adverse Drug Event Reporting and Monitoring* (September 29,
2008). The October 2008, *DIB* contains a brief description of this directive; for the full version see
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1773.

EDUCATION:

4. VIReC Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminar Series
Jim Demetriades and Nancy Wilck are presenting a cyber seminar on Monday, November 17, entitled
"VHA OI Emerging Health Technologies Sampler." Mr. Demetriades is Director of the Emerging Health
Technologies Office in the VHA's Office of Information and Ms. Wilck is a Program Specialist in the
same office. Participants are welcome to join the cyber seminar on a "first come, first serve" basis. VIReC
Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminars take place at 12 pm ET on the third Tuesday of each month.
However, the November 2008 seminar will be held on the third Monday of the month. Information can be
found on VIReC's VA Intranet Web site at:
http://www.virec.research.va.gov/EducationResources/Seminars/Clinical-Informatics.htm. For questions,
contact Joanne Stevens (joanne.stevens@va.gov), VIReC's Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminar
Coordinator.

● **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.

● **Intended Audience:** VA researchers and staff

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