VA Information Resource Center
Data Issues Brief
April 2000

1. Austin charges by fiscal year (1999, 2000), station number and user are now available on the AAC website. To access this information, go to the Web site: ███████████████████████████ .

2. Effective Saturday, April 1, a portion of the new VA "stronger password policy" went into effect for the Austin Automation Center's OS/390 Enterprise Server. This change affects all Austin users who sign on to the Enterprise Server. For more information, contact the AAC Help Desk at 512-326-6780 or the VIReC at 708-202-2413 for specific requirements on the new password policy.

3. The VIReC Web site now has outpatient documentation on the four outpatient SAS datasets:

    *   SC (Outpatient Procedure)
    *   SE (Outpatient Events)
    *   SF (Outpatient Visits)
    *   SG (Outpatient Diagnosis)

    available in PDF format for downloading. To find this information, go to the VIReC Web site at:

    http://www.virec.research.med.va.gov/DATABASES/NPCD/NPCD.HTM#NPCD

    The first line reads, "Download OPC documentation in PDF format". If you have Adobe Acrobat Reader **4.0,** click on the link to obtain the file. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.0 software installed, there is a link to enable you to download the software, then read the PDF file.

2. The list of VHA Office of Information (OI) top issues for March 2000 includes projects approved by the Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC). The ITAC "has recommended approval for Technical Services to work on three requests. Clozapine Registry enhancements will enhance the existing weekly extract to report the manufacturer of generic clozapine to the National Clozapine Coordinating Center as required by FDA. Continuous Improvement Cardiac

Surgery Program Expansion will add data elements to the Surgical Risk Assessment Report to assist in analysis and determination of positive care measures for surgical cardiac patients. The enhancements to the Prosthetics software will improve the ability of VISTA and the national database to track prosthetics devices inventories a need cited in an OIG report." For more information on this and other top issues from the Office of Information, visit their Web site at: ███████████████████████████████████ .

3. HCFA's Research Data Assistance Center (ResDAC) at the University of Minnesota is offering a 3-day course on Medicare data in Minneapolis, MN from June 12-14, 2000. The HCFA course focuses on computing and statistical methods that are appropriate for managing and analyzing administrative health care data. Claims-based research draws on computing, elementary statistics, study design, measurement theory (operationalization), clinical medicine, and health services research. The ResDAC is funded by the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) to assist researchers in gaining access to and understanding of Medicare and Medicaid data that is available from HCFA. ResDAC offers a variety of different courses on using Medicare data in research. For more information, please check the ResDAC web site at: www.resdac.umn.edu or call Phyllis Beaudette at 612-626-4247.

4. National Data Systems has just released the first version of the VHA Corporate Databases Monograph. The VHA Corporate Databases Monograph provides an introduction, overview, and features for each of the more than 95 currently active VHA national databases.

   The monograph is available on the VHA Technical Services Web Site at: ██████████████████████████████████ !

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