



***VA Information Resource Center***  
***Data Issues Brief***  
 May 2000

1. ***PTF Observation SAS Datasets.*** It has recently come to the attention of the VIREC that the Austin Automation Center (AAC) is generating SAS datasets for “observation” patients. That is, for example, if a patient undergoes outpatient surgery and is held overnight for observation, their record goes into this dataset, as opposed to PTF Main, PTF Bedsection, or PTF Procedure (Note: There is no PTF Surgery file for observation patients). FY-98, FY-99, and FY-00 (Year to date) files are currently available at the AAC. The file names are:

<b>MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.PMOyy</b> -- PTF Main SAS Files for Observation Patients	
MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.PMOyyR1 to R4	(Region 1 –4)
MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.PMOyy.QTR1 to QTR4	(Quarter 1-4)
<b>MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.PBOyy</b> -- PTF Bedsection SAS Files for Observation Patients	
MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.PBOyyR1 to R4	(Region 1 –4)
MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.PBOyy.QTR1 to QTR4	(Quarter 1-4)
<b>MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.PPOyy</b> -- PTF Non-Surgical Procedure SAS Files for Observation Patients	
MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.PPOyyR1 to R4	(Region 1 –4)
MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.PPOyy.QTR1 to QTR4	(Quarter 1-4)

The file structures in the observation databases mirror the PTF inpatient file structures (see inpatient database documentation on the VIREC Web site at: <http://www.virec.research.med.va.gov>.)

2. ***ERIC Internet Course:*** Incidence and Prevalence Internet-based Short Course for CME Credit Starts April 1, 2000. The Epidemiologic Research and Information Center (ERIC) at the Durham, North Carolina VA Medical Center and The Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill announce the offering of a short two-hour course on the topics of incidence and prevalence for Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit. This course will be available over the Internet and will be offered for free for a period of three months. Courses for CME credit can be accessed by going to the following URL: <http://www.sph.unc.edu/courses/eric/>.

3. **Health Economics Seminar Series.** The Health Economics Resource Center (HERC) in Palo Alto is conducting a seminar series via the VA video-conferencing system (V-TEL). The V-TEL sessions are scheduled through VANTS Video Operations, Martinsburg, WV. Participants must register for the course by contacting Sally Hui at the HERC, phone: (650) 493-5000 x27014. Please call Steve Emmons (304) 262-7620, should you have any technical questions. Additional teleconferencing information is also available on the VA Intranet at <http://vaww.va.gov/vants/>. Also, visit the HERC Web site at <http://www.herc.research.med.va.gov> for additional economics-related topics.

4. **AHSR Research Methods Seminars.** Plans for the Fall 2000 AHSR Seminars in Health Services Research Methods in Washington, DC, are being finalized. The course will run October 30, 31 and November 1 at the Georgetown University Conference Center. Several HSR&D investigators will be faculty at the seminars, including Carol Ashton, MD, MPH, Denise Hynes, Ph.D. and Diane Cowper, M.A. Additional information regarding these seminars will be posted on the AHSR Web site at: <http://www.ahsr.org> in the near future.

5. **Exchange look-up.** The VA Intranet mail system contains a global address book with the title, departmental affiliation, email, telephone number, and postal address of all "Exchange" members throughout the national VA system. Previously, in order to view this address book, you needed your own account. Now this information is available through a lookup option at <http://vaww.va.gov/med>. The "White Pages" of the VA Phone Book provides users with the ability to search for any VA employee who is in the VA's Exchange Global Address List, while the "Yellow Pages" can be used to search for a VA Facility. Future plans call for the "Yellow Pages" to be integrated with the VA Facilities & Leadership Directory.

**Note:** This is *not* the Employee Locator System that only identifies individuals at HQ.

6. **Statistical Web Site.** The non-VA Web site for an Electronic Statistics Textbook offers training in the understanding and application of statistics. The material was developed at the StatSoft R&D department based on many years of teaching undergraduate and graduate statistics courses and covers a wide variety of applications, including laboratory research (biomedical, agricultural, etc.), business statistics and forecasting, social science statistics and survey research, data mining, engineering and quality control applications, and many others. Thanks to VIREC Health Information Analyst Pat Murphy for finding the site. For more information, visit: <http://www.statsoft.com/textbook/stathome.html>.

*Data Issues Briefs* are developed 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. *Data Issues Briefs* are produced on a monthly basis and are distributed through e-mail subscriptions. Earlier issues are posted and available on the VIREC Web site at <http://www.virec.research.med.va.gov>. If you wish to receive future issues direct, please send an e-mail message to the VIREC at [virec@research.hines.med.va.gov](mailto:virec@research.hines.med.va.gov) or call 708-202-2413.