



VA Information Resource Center

Data Issues Brief

November 2000

1. GAF File Name Change

As of Fiscal Year 2001, the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) files have a new file name. The RMTPRD.NPC.SAS.GAFYY naming convention will be changed to: MDPPRD.MDP.SAS.GAFYY, where YY represents the year being accessed. This new naming convention applies to the current fiscal year files, as well as previous years. For more information, or if you are having problems accessing the files, contact Cyndi Cavalier, Austin Automation Center (AAC), Medical Data Processing Analyst at: (Telephone) 512-326-6728 or (E-mail) cyndi.cavalier@mail.va.gov.

2. News From the AAC

There have been a couple of important personnel changes at the Austin Automation Center (AAC). Ms. Linda L. Voges is the new Director, AAC, effective November 5, 2000. Ms. Voges previously held the AAC position of Acting Director. Mr. Samuel R. Georgeson is assigned to the Associate Director for Information Resources Management (IRM) Services position effective November 19, 2000. Mr. Georgeson was formerly the AAC's Chief, Enterprise Systems Division. Ms. Voges can be reached at: (Telephone) 512-326-6001 or (E-mail) linda.voges@mail.va.gov while Mr. Georgeson can be contacted at: (Telephone) 512-326-7428 or (E-mail) sam.georgeson@mail.va.gov.

3. Upcoming ResDAC Medicare Data Courses

The Research Data Assistance Center (ResDAC) is offering a 2-day workshop, HCFA 103: Introduction to Medicare Cost & Payment Data, in Boston, MA, on January 11th & 12th, 2001. HCFA 103 focuses on the use of Medicare's administrative data for research with an emphasis on cost data. It will be conducted in a computer-based classroom, at the Boston University School of Medicine with specially designed training databases and modules. The workshop design is highly interactive and requires the registrant to have some basic computer experience. It is designed for individuals who have some research background (basic epidemiological concepts and interpretation) and some experience with health services (either clinical or research) but who have little or no hands-on experience using Medicare cost data. The course will cover the origin, flow, quality and research applications of Medicare data.

Additionally, the ResDAC is offering a 3-day Workshop: HCFA 101: Introduction to the Use of Medicare Data for Research, at the University of California, San Diego. The workshop is scheduled for January 16th-18th, 2001. A complete description of both workshops, as well as registration information can be found on the ResDAC web site at <http://resdac.umn.edu/> by clicking on training. Specific questions about the workshops can be directed to ResDAC's Outreach and Training Coordinator, Phyllis Beaudette, at (Telephone) 612-626-4247 or (E-mail) beaud005@tc.umn.edu.

4. AHA to Release Hospital Statistics - 2001

The American Hospital Association (AHA) is planning on releasing a new edition of *Hospital Statistics* on November 27, 2000. *Hospital Statistics 2000* contains a wealth of information on U.S. hospitals at the National, U.S. Census Region and Division, State, Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and Bed-size levels. Based on the results of the AHA Annual Survey of more than 6,200 hospitals nationwide, *Hospital Statistics* is an important reference for utilization, personnel, facility and service, and financial data. More information can be obtained at 800-242-2626 or through the AHA product Web site at <http://www.ahaonlinestore.com>.

5. AMA Publishes Several New Physician Data Resources

The American Medical Association (AMA) recently announced the release of several new physician data resources. *Physician Characteristics and Distribution in the US: 2001-2002 Edition* contains data on over 797,000 Doctors of Medicine derived from the updated AMA Physician Masterfile. This edition contains information on physician trends, characteristics, and distribution. *Physician Socioeconomic Statistics*, available in either a text or CD format, is considered an accurate and current data source for benchmarking, physician practice valuation, consultation, litigation support, and tax planning. The 37th edition of the *Directory of Physicians in the United States* will also be available before the end of 2000. This resource, also available in text and CD formats, contains detailed information on 800,000 physicians, from residents to retired doctors. Another resource that may be of use to health services research is the *AMA Study on Physician's Use of the World Wide Web, 2001* that is scheduled for release in December 2000. This study compiles data from more than 1,000 in-depth telephone interviews with physicians regarding their on-line behavior. Additional information is available on the AMA Web site at <http://www.ama-assn.org> or by calling 800-621-8335.

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 or call 708-202-2413.