

VA INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER

DATA ISSUES BRIEF

APRIL 2007

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VA DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS:

1. VA Research Data Security & Privacy

Researchers should intermittently check the VA Research Data Security & Privacy page of the VA Office of Research and Development (ORD) Web site for updates (<http://www.research.va.gov/resources/data-security/>). ORD recently added a new category of information, "Checklists, Certification Forms & Other Responsibilities." Researchers are reminded under the category of training information of the VA Research Data Security & Privacy course that is available through the VA Learning Online (VALO) Campus or the Learning Management System (LMS). This course was posted March 15, 2007 and must be completed no later than June 12, 2007.

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2. New Orlando VA Hospital Using Facility Number 675

The new Orlando VA Hospital is using Facility Number 675 and associated suffixes. In recognition of this change, six of the 673 Facility Numbers (Tampa) have been converted to 675 Facility Numbers (Orlando) in the Medical SAS Datasets at the VA's Austin Automation Center (AAC). These changes are retroactive to the beginning of fiscal year 2007 (FY07). For more information, see the National Patient Care Database (NPCD) Web site on the VA Intranet (address given in the Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief*).

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3. VHA Discontinues Quarterly and Regional Medical SAS Files

Beginning in FY07, the VA's AAC is discontinuing quarterly and regional inpatient and outpatient Medical SAS Datasets since there is no longer any technical need to build intermediate files. As in the past, a single production cumulative dataset for each of the inpatient and outpatient files is updated throughout the fiscal year. For more information about the construction of the SAS datasets see the

Medical SAS Datasets documentation provided on the VIREC Internet Web site at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/Medical-SAS-Datasets/SASdocumentation.htm>.

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4. New HERC Guidebook Released: *Preference Measurement in Economic Analysis*

The VA's Health Economics Resource Center (HERC) released on April 2 a new guidebook entitled *Preference Measurement in Economic Analysis*. This guidebook presents an overview of the concepts of preference measurement and quality-adjusted life years (QALYs), and includes such things as recommended criteria by which to select both the methods and measures to use in cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA). Researchers can find the guidebook on HERC's Internet Web site:

<http://www.herc.research.va.gov/home/default.asp>.

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5. VA Revises Appendices A, B, and C of Schedule for Rating Disabilities

The VA is revising effective April 19 its Schedule for Rating Disabilities, Appendices A, B, and C to include all current diagnostic codes. Appendix A is also being amended to include all diagnostic code historical information since the last review. These Appendices are tools for users of the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities. Further information can be found in the Federal Register at

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/pdf/E7-4914.pdf>

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EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

6. May Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminar

The Cyber Seminars on Clinical Informatics, sponsored by VIREC and the Center of Excellence on Implementing Evidence-Based Practice, take place at 12 pm ET on the third Tuesday of each month. Patricia Ebright, BSN, MSN, DNS is presenting the May seminar on Tuesday, May 15. The title of her presentation is "Understanding Real Work Complexity for Design and Implementation of IT." Dr. Ebright is Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at Indiana University. She is a clinical nurse specialist with expertise in designing delivery-of-care systems. Participants are welcome to join the session on a "first come, first serve" basis. Information on the series can be found at:

http://www.hsrp.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/catalog.cfm. For further information contact Laurel Nevinslong at laurel.nevinslong@va.gov.

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7. AcademyHealth 2007 Annual Research Meeting Offers Methods Seminars

There will be pre- and post-conference seminars in health services research methods at the AcademyHealth 2007 Annual Research Meeting, June 3-5 in Orlando FL. Hierarchical modeling, Bayesian methods, endogenous explanatory variables, and Healthcare Cost and Utilization (HCUP) and National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) data will be discussed. Additional registration is required. For more information go to

<http://www.academyhealth.org/arm/adjunct/seminars.htm>.

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