

VA INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER

DATA ISSUES BRIEF

NOVEMBER 2007

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VIReC UPDATES:

1. VA Researchers Should Use VIReC INTRAnet Web Site

VIReC has recently realized that many VA researchers are unaware that they should be using the VIReC INTRAnet Web site instead of the VIReC INTERNet Web site. VIReC maintains its INTERNet Web site mainly to serve VA researchers based in academic settings, researchers in other government agencies, and researchers outside of government service who may be interested or enticed to perform research focused on veterans' issues. VIReC maintains its INTRAnet Web site to serve the needs of researches within the VA. The VIReC INTRAnet Web site contains all of the content of the VIReC INTERNet Web site, plus additional content. If you need assistance to access the VIReC INTRAnet, call the VIReC Help Desk at 1-708-202-2413.

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VA DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS:

2. DSS Files Sorted and Indexed by SCRSSN

After an extensive discussion on the VA HSRData-L listserv (see the VIREC VA Intranet Web page to find out about this listserv [VIREC address given in the Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief*]), the Decision Support System (DSS) group has resorted all its SAS National Data Extract (NDE) files and indexed them by scrambled SSN (SCRSSN). The SCRSSN index replaces the STA_3 index. The exceptions are the ALB files which do not contain SSN-level data. These ALB files remain unchanged. VA researchers wishing to read about the issues raised in the listserv discussion can go to the HSRData-L Archives on the VA Intranet and look in October 2007 under the topic “Suggestion for reorganizing DSS NDEs for increased efficiency” (the address is given in the Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief*).

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3. DSS Medical Record Book FY2008 Available

The DSS Medical Record Book FY2008 is now available on the DSS VA Intranet Web site (the address is given in the Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief*). This book updates the FY2004 Medical Record Book and contains information on the DSS medical encounter record and the descriptive elements of the DSS encounter record. The purpose of the record book is to assist national and local DSS users in specifying the criteria required to qualify DSS encounter records and complete record searches.

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4. New SAS OEF/OIF Transition Patient Advocate Files Available at Austin CFD

National Data Systems (NDS) has created Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) SAS datasets at Austin’s Corporate Franchise Data Center (CFD). NDS derives these files from data collected in the Primary Care Management Module (PCMM) (an application within the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture [Vista]), to identify Transition Patient Advocates, Program Managers and Clinical Case Managers for OEF/OIF veterans. The VISN Support Service Center (VSSC) uses PCMM to track patients and assign staff for Congressional reports. NDS provides additional information and supporting documentation about these SAS datasets at CFD on the National Patient Care Database (NPCD) Intranet Web site (the address is given in the Intranet version of this *Data Issues Brief*).

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NON-VA DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS:

5. CMS Signals It Will Switch to ICD-10 Codes

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has contracted with the American Health Information Management Association to study the issues involved in a CMS switch from International Classification of Diseases (ICD)-9 code sets to ICD-10. A CMS spokesperson said the contract should signal to hospitals and other stakeholders that they should begin considering their own transition plans. ICD-9 codes were designed primarily for billing and payment, but they have been increasingly important for public health reporting, research, etc. The ICD-10 coding system has 210,000 codes in comparison to the ICD-9 system of 17,000 codes. ICD-10 codes are currently in use throughout Europe.

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EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

6. November Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminar

Kathleen M. Lysell, Psy.D. is presenting a cyber seminar on Tuesday, November 20 entitled “Using the Mental Health Assistant Software for Outcomes Monitoring and Program Evaluation.” Dr. Lysell is Associate Chief Consultant for Mental Health Informatics with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Mental Health Services and on the Executive Committee of the Mental Health Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI). Participants are welcome to join the session on a “first come, first serve” basis. The Cyber Seminars on Clinical Informatics, sponsored by VIREC, take place at 12 pm ET on the third Tuesday of each month. Information can be found at:

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

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CONFERENCES:

7. Fourth Nationwide Health Information Network Forum December 11-12 in Long Beach CA

The 4th Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) Forum on Trial Implementations will be held on December 11-12 in Long Beach CA at the Hyatt Regency. The advancement of the NHIN initiative, a key element of the national health information technology strategy, will provide the foundation for interoperable, secure and standards-based health information exchange nationally. The objectives of the 4th NHIN Forum are (1) to develop clarity on how trial implementations are addressing key aspects of information exchanges via the NHIN, (2) to enlist public input and share experiences from state and regional health information exchanges as they implement and test trial implementations of the NHIN, and (3) to learn how the work of the Health Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP) and the Certification Commission for Health Information Technology (CCHIT) are being used to inform the NHIN trial implementations. The 4th NHIN Forum will be open to the public and will include participants in key processes supported by the Office for the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology.

Online registration for the forum is available at <http://www.blsmmeetings.net/nhinf/>. Additional information on the forum will be posted shortly at www.hhs.gov/healthit/healthnetwork/forums/. A special rate of \$118 per single/double per night (plus tax) has been arranged for the forum, but there are a limited number of rooms available at this rate. Reservations should be made directly with the Hyatt Regency Long Beach, mentioning NHIN Forum to receive the reduced rate, and will be accepted until Friday, November 9, 2007. After that cut-off date, reservations will be accepted on a space-available basis. Online reservations cannot be accepted for the NHIN block; they must be made by phone at 1-562-491-1234 (Hyatt Regency Long Beach, 200 South Pine Avenue). Questions can be emailed to ONC-NHINForum@hhs.gov.

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