VIReC RESEARCHERS' GUIDE TO VA DATA

Data Issues Brief   February 2003

1. HIPAA Information for Researchers to be Presented at the HSR&D Annual Meeting

The latest VA guidance for researchers to comply with new data privacy issues in the Health Insurance Portability and Privacy Act (HIPAA) will be presented in the VIReC-sponsored workshop "HIPAA Privacy for Researchers: De bunking the Myths" at the Health Services Research & Development Service National Meeting, February 12-14, 2003. The workshop will be part of the Workshops Session 1 on Thursday afternoon, February 13, and the progress on VA's efforts to assist researchers in addressing new privacy requirements in research will be discussed

2. VHA Directive Re-Defines Priority Groups

VHA Directive 2003-003, "Provision of Hospital and Outpatient Care to Enrolled Veterans," was issued January 17, 2003, to announce Secretary Principi's decision to suspend enrolling new applicants for VHA care who are in Priority Group 8. The Directive includes, as Attachment C, a summary of the priority groups and is available on the Internet at http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/health/direct/12003003.pdf

3. New Listings of Cost Center & Budget Object Codes Useful for Economic Research

Two VA handbooks have been reissued with current information of interest to researchers using VA cost data. VA Handbook 4671.1, "Cost Centers," and VA Handbook 4671.2, "Budget Object Codes," incorporate changes that have occurred since their issuance on March 6, 2001. The complete handbooks are available on the Internet:

Cost center: http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/finance/v4671_1hrv1.htm
BOC: http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/finance/v4671_2hr1.htm

4. New VA Site Listing Data Tool Available from OPP/PSSG Useful for Longitudinal Analyses

The VHA Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) Planning Systems Support Group (PSSG) has released a PC-based program that reduces the effort needed to compare lists of sites across multiple years. The program may be downloaded from the PSSG Intranet Web page INSER THE URL HERE. There is a help file that explains how to use the program and describes the displays and the output. Users will also need to download the DVDC database that can be found at the Web site.

5. VA Data Training Opportunity: Camp CPRS 2003

Clinical Informatics teams from VA medical centers will gather in Atlanta May 12-15, 2003, for Camp CPRS 2003. Optional classes will be offered on May 16. The Camp will include hands-on classes, breakout sessions, software demonstrations, exhibits to help attendees maximize the use of CPRS. Registration for Camp CPRS opens February 18, 2003. For full information, see the VA Intranet Web site ███████████████████████████████████████ .

6. Office of Cyber Security Announces Registration for VA InfoSec2003

The InfoSec2003 meeting will be June 24-27, 2003, in San Francisco, CA. The meeting is intended for members of VA's Cyber Security Community: Information Security Officers (ISOs); Alternate ISOs; cyber security staff in national, administration and staff offices; LAN/WAN/Systems managers, and other managers and executives. Registration and supporting information (e.g., hotel registration) may be found at the VA Intranet site ██. Questions about this or any other VA InfoSec2003 related issue should be directed to Mr. William Naida (708-786-5829).

7. Version 2.1 of the AHRQ Prevention Quality Indicators Software

Version 2.1, revision 2 (January 10, 2003) of the AHRQ Prevention Quality Indicators software is now available on the AHRQ QI website (http://www.qualityindicators.ahrq.gov) in SAS and SPSS format. The Prevention Quality Indicators (QIs) are a set of measures that can be used with hospital inpatient discharge data to identify "ambulatory care-sensitive conditions." These are conditions for which good outpatient care can potentially prevent the need for hospitalization or for which early intervention can prevent complications or more severe disease. This version is valid for use with data from October 1, 1994 to September 30, 2002.

8. Latest Issue of *VIReC Insights* Published

The Winter 2002 issue of *VIReC Insights*, entitled "Researchers' Introduction to the KLFMenu 'Create Report' Option," is on the VIReC Web site: http://www.virec.research.va.gov/virec_insights.htm.