



1. FY2003 Stop Codes for Ambulatory Care

Current descriptions and definitions of VHA outpatient workload centers (production units) were issued July 28, 2003, in VHA Directive 2003-040, "Fiscal Year 2003 Decision Support System (DSS) Outpatient Identifiers." The directive, which expires May 31, 2005, gives background information and current codes for DSS Identifiers, also known as clinic stop codes. Researchers will find this information important for analysis of VHA outpatient care utilization data in the Medical SAS Outpatient Datasets. For full details of the directive, see <http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/health/direct/12003040.pdf>.

2. New AAC Customer Information Guide

The Austin Automation Center (AAC) has issued the August 2003 edition of the *AAC Customer Information Guide*. The guide includes directions for requesting access to data at AAC, plus brief descriptions of the computer applications and utilities maintained at the AAC. Contacts and data stewards are listed with their telephone numbers and e-mail addresses. The guide can be viewed on the VA Intranet at [REDACTED]. Questions can be addressed to Bennett Brier at 512-326-6556 or Bennett.brier@mail.va.gov.

3. Bibliography on Accuracy of ICD-9-CM Coding of Diagnoses

A Web-based bibliography of articles evaluating the accuracy of ICD-9-CM coding of diagnoses is available from the Measurement Excellence and Training Resource Information Center (METRIC), the newest resource center of VHA Health Services Research and Development Service. Considered a work in progress, the bibliography currently includes 15 annotated citations, generally specific to a particular diagnosis or set of health problems. Suggestions of additional citations are welcomed. See the bibliography at: <http://www.measurementexperts.org/icd9ab.htm>.

4. VISN 16 To Create Financial and Clinical Data Marts

VISN 16 is working with the VISN Support Service Center (VSSC) to create and maintain the Financial and Clinical Data Marts (FCDM), relational databases of enterprise-wide data for statistical analysis with on-line analytical processing tools. DSS National Data Extracts (NDE) of Laboratory ("fact of lab"), Radiology (procedures and results), and Pharmacy data are now available. Plans are to have selected data elements of VISTA's Vitals package available through the FCDM in late 2004. De-identified data will be available. A re-identifying and release process, for specific projects with IRB approvals, is in development. Further information is available at <http://klfmenu.med.va.gov/>; select "DSS" and then "DSS Reports" from choices in the left margin.

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