OCT – 6 2003

To: See Below

From: Acting Director
       Office of Public Health

Subject: National Data Warehouse Agency-wide Export

This is to inform you of upcoming plans for an Indian Health Service (IHS) special export of all Resource and Patient Management (RPMS) Patient Registration (PR) and Patient Care Component (PCC) data from October 1, 2000, to the present. The data will be used to populate a new national data warehouse (DW) developed by the Information Technology Support Center (ITSC) in Albuquerque. I am also asking for your support during this IHS-wide effort.

The DW project and its anticipated benefits have been widely discussed throughout the Indian Health system at various meetings with the Information System Advisory Council (ISAC), Executive Leadership Group, Indian Health Leadership Council, Combined National Councils, and various Tribal and consultation meetings. The DW project incorporated various recommendations from these leadership groups.

Background

The ITSC reviewed and evaluated the Agency's current data collection/reporting processes. This included administrative uses, such as official workload reports and user population for resource allocation purposes. Clinical needs such as the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organization (JCAHO), ORYX standards, and surveillance and epidemiology were also reviewed. A number of improvements have already been implemented in order to support these ongoing requirements.

One of the most critical steps to improve the quality of these data is the development of a new, state-of-the-art, enterprise-wide DW to replace the existing NPIRS and ORYX national data systems. The DW project team is working closely with the Division of Program Statistics, Area Statistical and Planning Officers, and Information System Coordinators (ISC). The design and programming of the DW is almost complete. As a result, plans are now underway for the initial data load to begin November 3, 2003, and continue sequentially, Area-by-Area, over the next 9 to 10 months. Initial data loads will be limited to RPMS data. However, the DW project team, in conjunction with other Headquarters and Area staff, has developed a detailed guide for non-RPMS sites to participate in the DW project. Every effort will be made to minimize the impact on available resources at the local level.

Schedule

Initial data loads for the DW project will begin approximately November 3, 2003, with the Tucson Area. A detailed version of the proposed schedule of the DW load process has been provided to both your Area ISCs and Statistical Officers. (Both groups are well aware of the project, proposed schedule and are supportive of the project.) Please ensure that they carefully review the schedule and brief you on the details pertinent to your Area.

The DW project will run in parallel with the existing NPIRS and ORYX production databases over the next year. This process will ensure required production systems, such as workload, user population, and ORYX processes, will not be affected. As new data are received and loaded in the DW, on-going testing will ensure the new DW process will support these on-going needs. A decision to switch to the new DW environment from current production systems will be made after sufficient testing and parallel processing has occurred to ensure all production needs can be met in the DW environment. Be assured your Area staff will be involved in this decision as well.

Benefits

The DW project will yield many data quality and reporting improvements such as:

- Unduplicating patient reports and improving the accuracy of the user population reports.

- Containing additional data items such as medications and lab test results in order to better report patient outcomes.

- Ensuring the DW more closely mirrors data at local sites so reports are more readily verifiable.

- Assisting local sites and Area ISCs track and monitor locally exported RPMS data for DW purposes.

- Containing a more complete data repository to support your Area's performance measurement activities, health status, surveillance, and epidemiology needs.

- Providing the Agency a "single version of truth" by using one, rigorously gathered, verified, and maintained data source.

I am confident the DW project will improve the IHS reporting needs. We all recognize the increased need for data that are timely, accurate, and complete to support our Agency mission to "elevate the health status of American Indian and Alaska Native people to the highest possible level." A similar letter will be sent to Tribal Leaders and Health Directors to provide them with advance information, rationale for the project, expected timeframes, and anticipated benefits.

Thank you for your support during this important project. If you have questions about the DW project, please call Ms. Edna Paisano or Dr. Karen Carver, Statistics Program, Office of Program Support, on (301) 443-1180.

/s/ Candace M Jones, MPH
for
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Assistant Surgeon General

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