

2012-2013 VIREC Database and Methods Cyber Seminar Series



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Overview of VA Data, Information Systems, National Databases and Research Uses

October 1, 2012

Presented by:

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Center Director, VIREC



Session Objectives

- Introduce Series
- Provide Brief Overview of VA Data Sources



Series Objectives

To provide information about:

- Different types of VA data and information systems
- Uses of VA data in past research and potentially new applications
- Limitations of using secondary data in research
- Resources to support research use of VA data



Topics for Today



Overview of VA Databases for Research



VA Databases



Processing Platforms and Access Portals



Policies Governing Research Access



Where to go for more help

Topics for Today



Overview of VA Databases for Research



VA Databases



Processing Platforms and Access Portals



Policies Governing Research Access

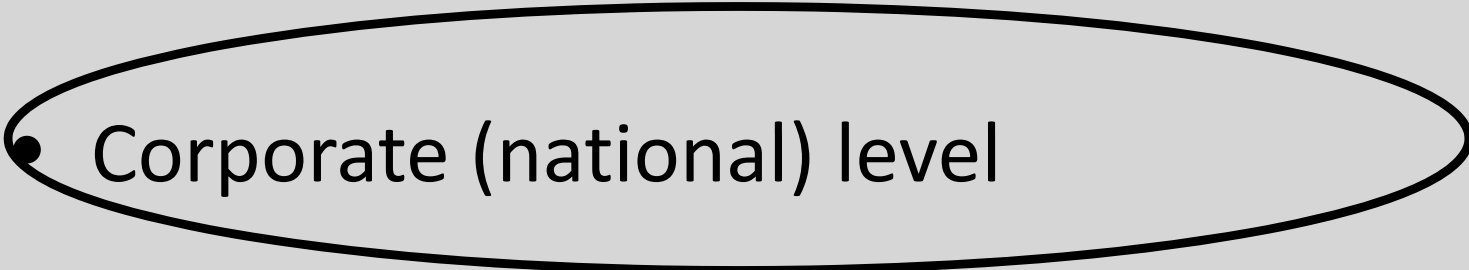


Where to go for more help

Overview: Many Sources of VA Data

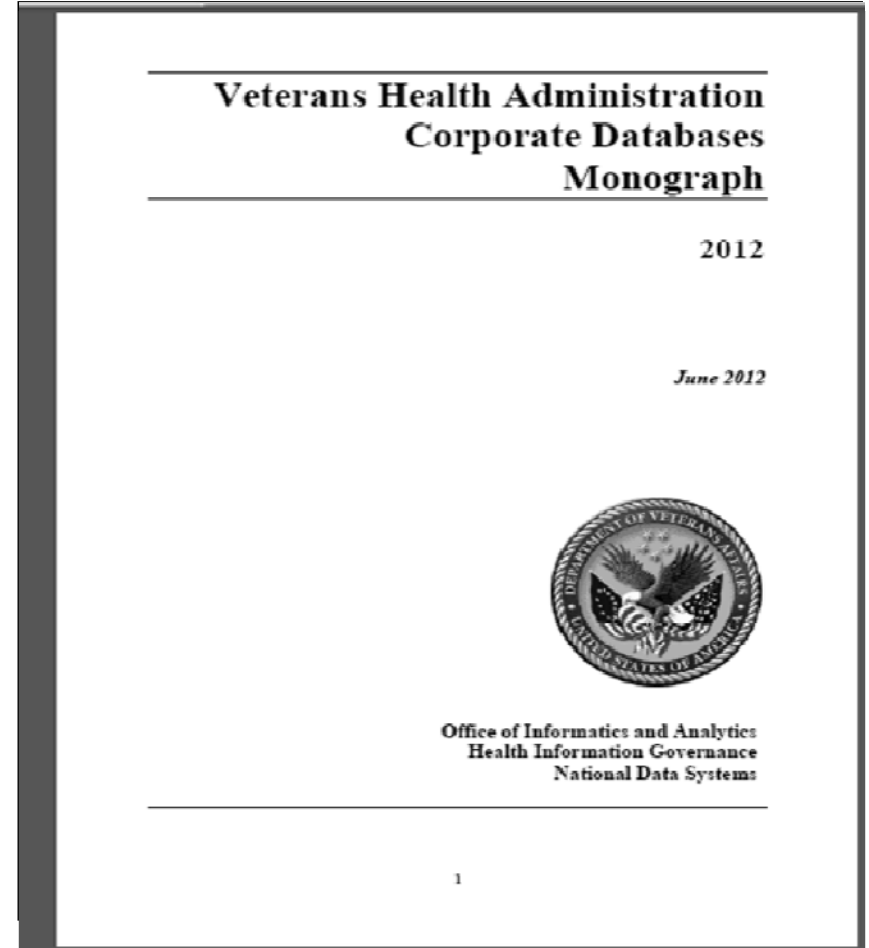


Overview: Levels of Data

- Local facility data
 - VISN level data
 - Corporate (national) level
- 

VHA Corporate Databases Monograph

- **Produced by Office of Informatics and Analytics (OIA), National Data Systems**
 - Includes 139 databases and information systems
 - Available on VA Intranet (contact virec@va.gov for url)



Toolkit for New Users of VA Data

The screenshot shows the VA Information Resource Center (VIREC) website. At the top, there is a header for the United States Department of Veterans Affairs with a search bar. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Veteran Services, Business, About VA, Media Room, Locations, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled "VA INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER (VIREC)" and features a sidebar on the left with links like "VIREC Home", "VA/CMS Home", "About Us", "New Users of VA Data", "Data Transition to CDW", "News & Updates", "FAQs", "Acronyms", and "HelpDesk". The main content area has a heading "Toolkit for New Users of VA Data" and an "Overview" section. The overview text states: "This toolkit is intended as a starting point for new users of VA data. It may also be useful to experienced VA researchers who may be unaware of the many resources available within the VA." Below this, it says "VIREC maintains an Internet site and an Intranet site. This is the Internet site. Please contact VIREC's HelpDesk if you need assistance locating the Intranet site. It is recommended that researchers use VA Intranet sites whenever possible. These sites contain additional information only available to VA staff." There is also a "Where to Start" section with text about data sources and search methods. On the right side, there is a "New Users" sidebar with links for "Introduction", "Toolkit", and "Tutorials", and a "General Resources" sidebar with expandable sections for "Data Access", "Data Sources", "Data Topics", and "Products & Services".

<http://www.virec.research.va.gov/Toolkit/Overview.htm>

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Where to go for more help

VA Databases

VA Inpatient and
Outpatient Data

VA CMS Data

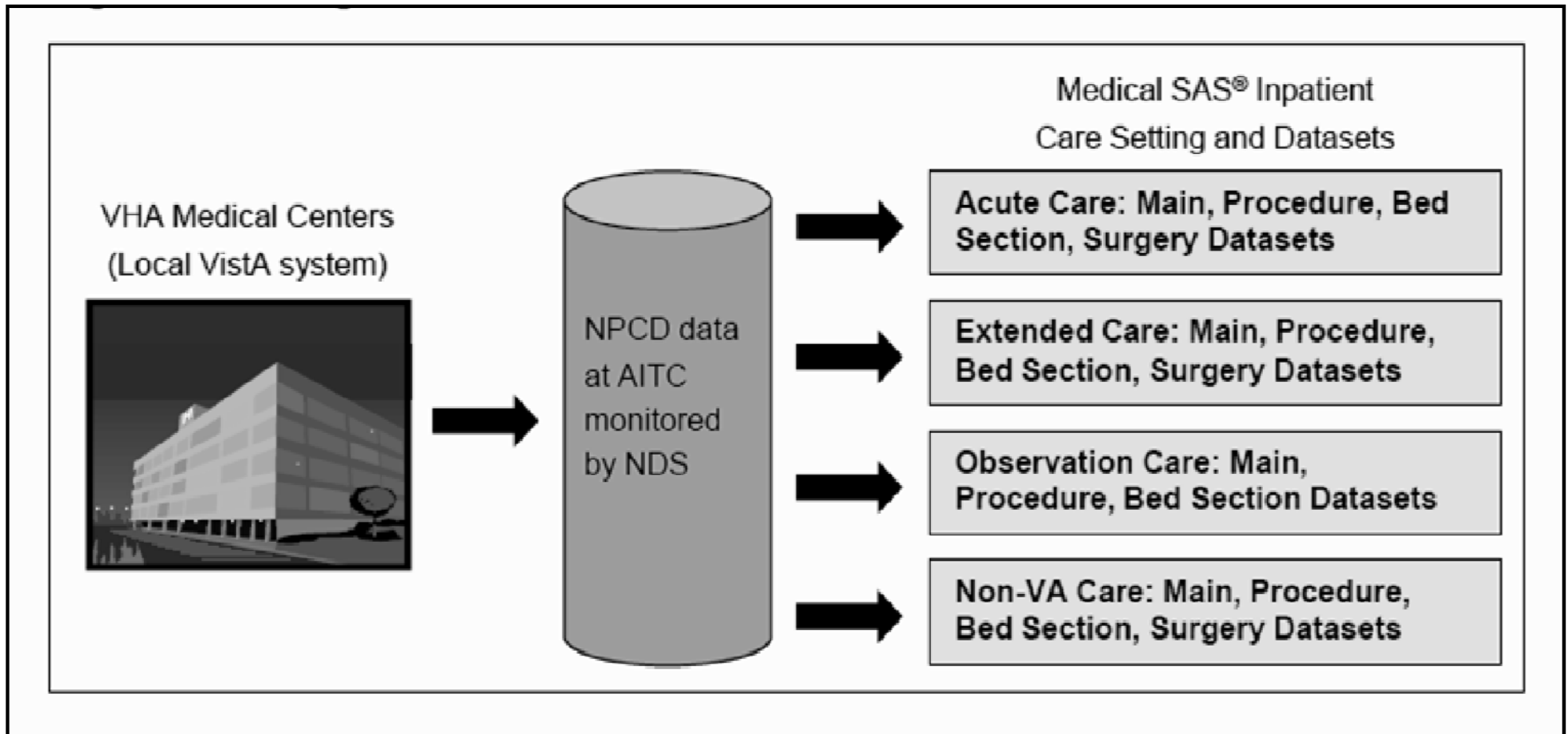
VA DSS National
Clinical Data

VA Pharmacy
Data

VA Vital Status
File

VA Corporate
Data Warehouse
Data

VA Inpatient Data

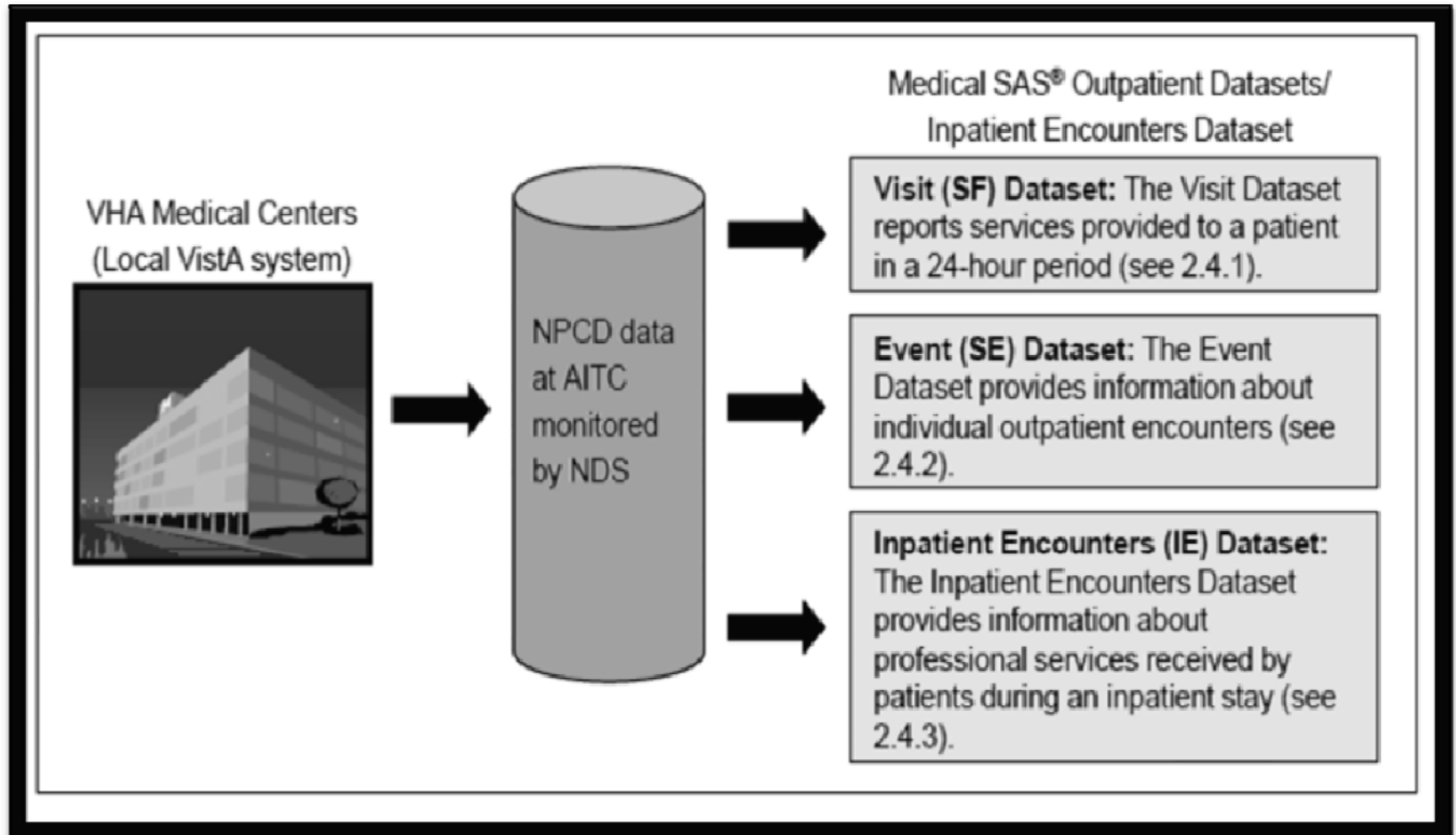


VA Inpatient Data

- Data element examples
 - Patient demographics
 - ICD-9 procedure/surgery codes
 - ICD-9 diagnosis codes
- Data steward:
 - National Data Systems (NDS)
- Website/where to go to find more:
 - <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/RUGs/RUG-MedSAS-IP-FY09-ER.pdf>



VA Outpatient Data



VA Outpatient Data

- Data element examples:

- Patient demographics
- CPT4 procedure codes
- ICD-9 diagnosis codes



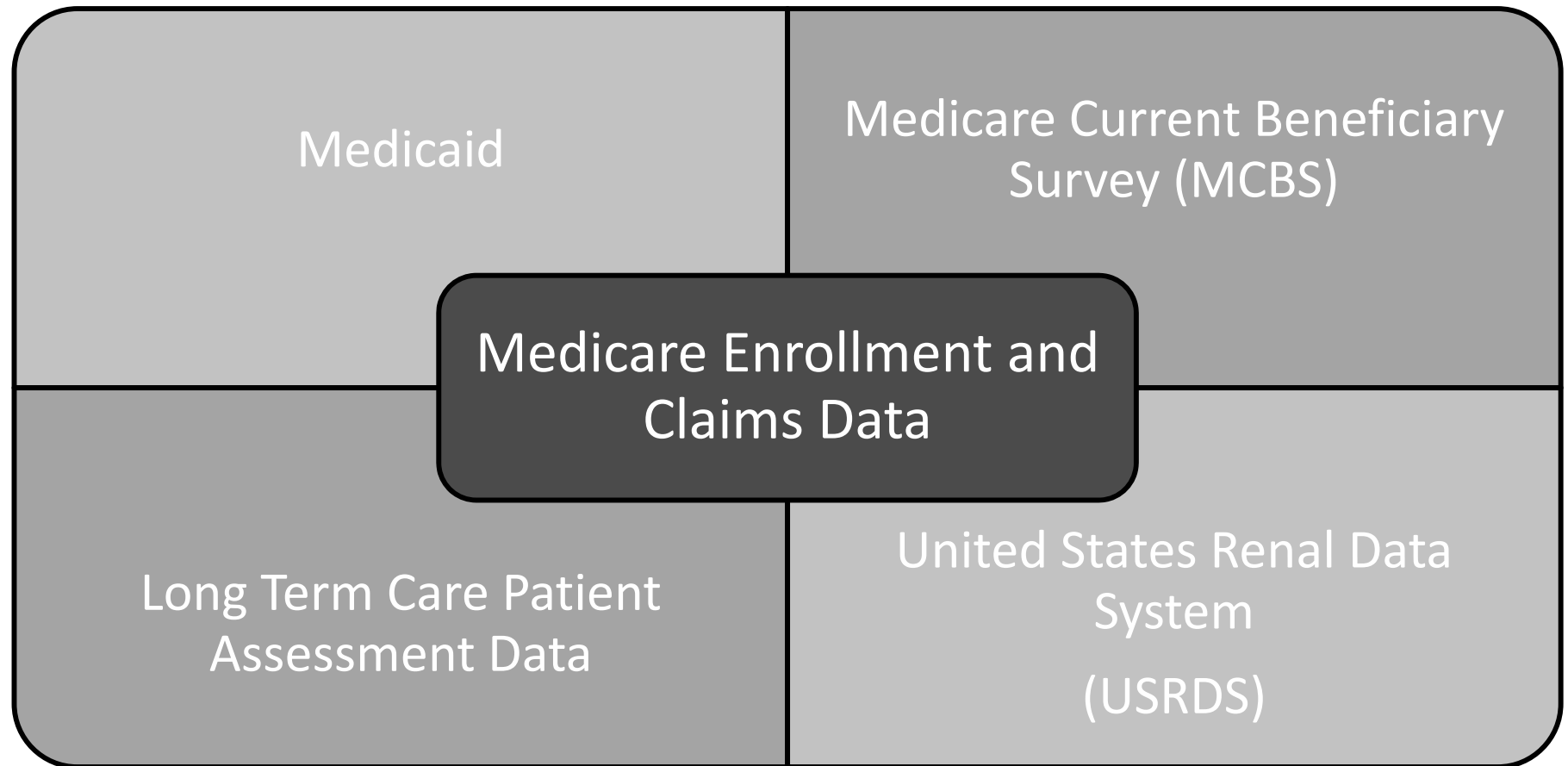
- Data steward:

- National Data Systems (NDS)

- Website/Where to go to find more information

- <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/RUGs/RUG-MedSAS-OP-FY09-ER.pdf>

VA/Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Data



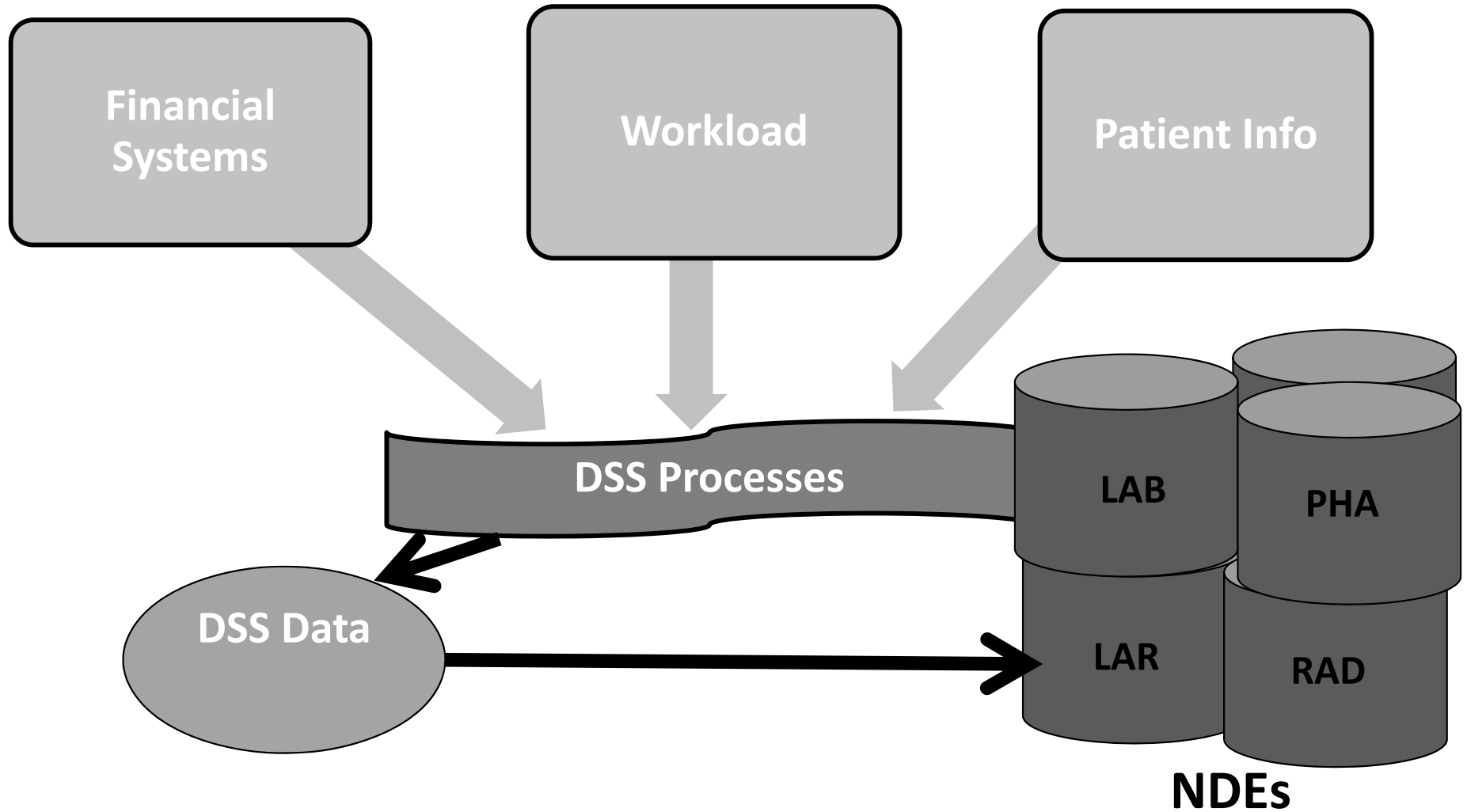
Data available for veterans eligible for VHA care and select non-veteran data

VA/Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Data

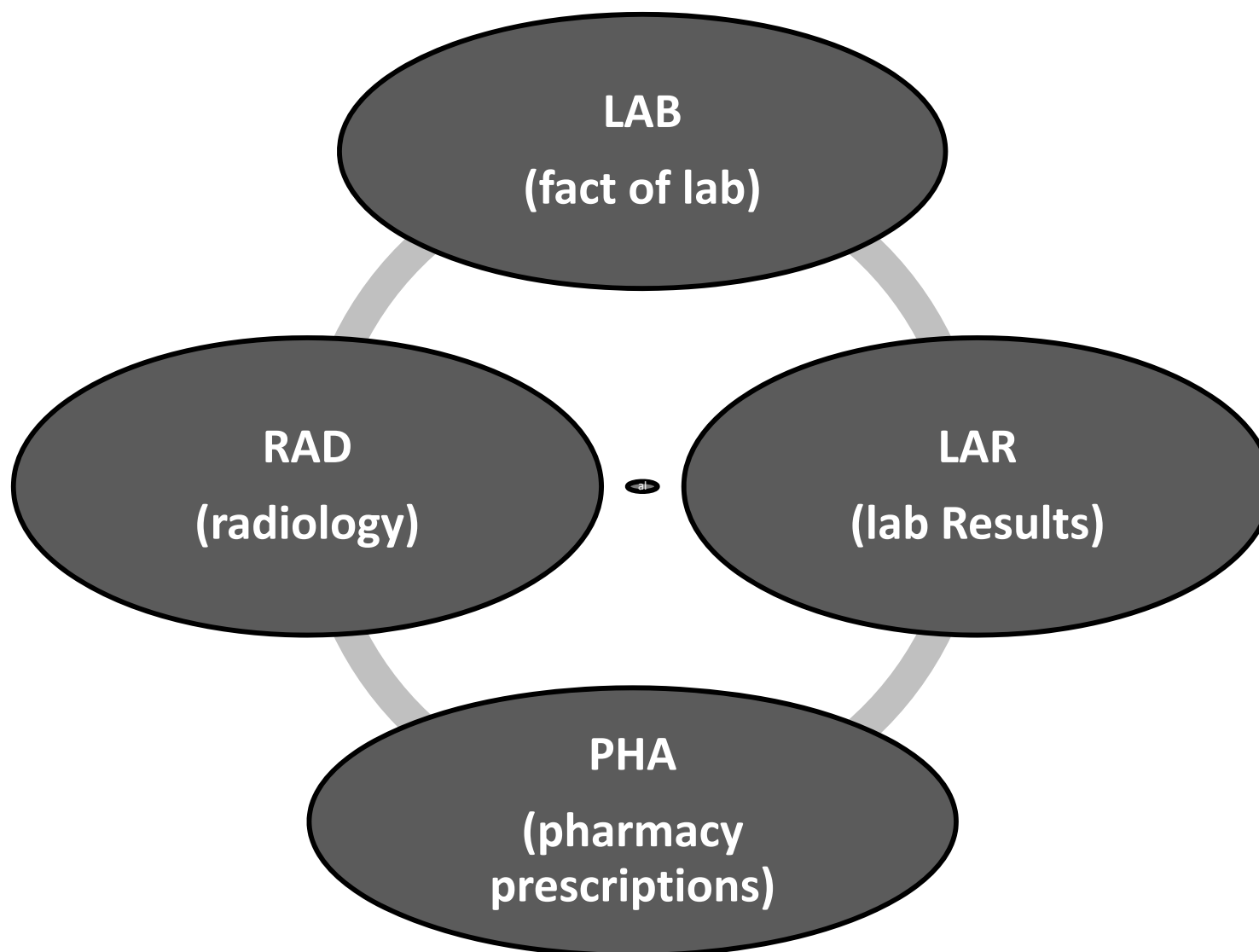
- Data element examples:
 - Demographics
 - ICD-9 and CPT4 procedure codes
 - ICD-9 diagnosis codes
- Data steward:
 - VIREC's VA/CMS Data for Research Project
- Website/where to go to find more information
 - <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/Index-VACMS.htm>

VA DSS National Clinical Data

Decision Support System (DSS) National Data Extracts (NDEs)



VA DSS National Clinical Data



VA DSS National Clinical Data

- Data Element Examples:

- Date
- Test results
- Ordering provider
- Costs



- Data Steward:

- VHA Decision Support Office

- Website/Where to go to find more information

- <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/RUGs/RUG-DSS-NDE-2nd-Ed-CY09-ER.pdf>

VA Pharmacy Data

Medications Dispensed from VA Pharmacies

Pharmacy Benefits
Management (PBM)

VHA Decision Support
System (DSS)



VA Pharmacy Data

- Data element examples:
 - Generic drug name, days supply, VA drug class, etc.
- Data Steward
 - PBM: Fran Cunningham, PharmD
 - DSS: VHA Decision Support Office
- Website/Where to go to find more information
 - <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/RUGs/RUG-PBM-2nd-Ed-CY08-ER.pdf>

VA Vital Status File

- General description:
 - Multiple sources of mortality information
 - VA Workload Data
 - BIRLS Death File
 - Medicare Vital Status File
 - SSA Death Master File
 - Two files: Master and Mini

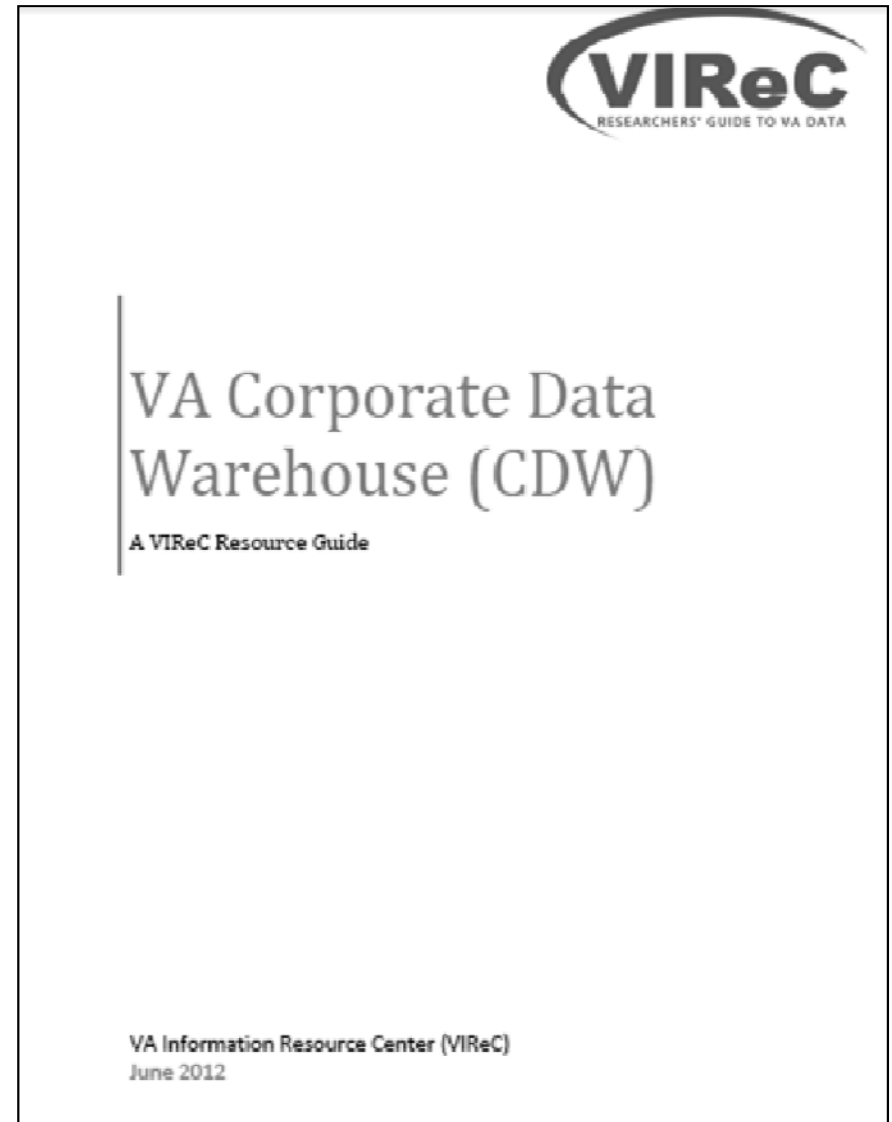
VA Vital Status File

- **Data element examples:**
 - Date of death (variables from the different sources and value selected as “best”)
 - Last healthcare utilization date
- **Data Steward:**
 - National Data Systems
- **Website/Where to go to find more information**
<http://www.virec.research.va.gov/VSF/Overview.htm>



Corporate Data Warehouse Data

- National repository of VHA administrative and clinical data
- Relational database organized into data domains
- Data available from 1999 to present and updated nightly



Corporate Data Warehouse Data

- Data Element Examples
 - Vital Signs
 - Immunization
 - Health Factors
 - Mental Health Assessment
 - Lab Microbiology
 - Lab Chem
- Data Steward:
 - National Data Systems
- Website/Where to go to find more information:
<http://www.virec.research.va.gov/CDW/RG-CDW-CY12-ER.pdf>

Topics for Today



Overview of VA Databases for Research



VA Databases



Processing Platforms and Access Portals



Policies Governing Research Access



Where to go for more help

Processing Platforms

- Austin Information Technology Center Mainframe (AITC)
 - Centralized computer processing center under VA Office of Information and Technology (OI+T)
 - See <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/AITC/Overview.htm> for more information
- VINCI
 - Secure computing environment for VA researchers
 - See <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/VINCI/Overview.htm> for more information

VistA Access Portals

- Compensation & Pension Record Interchange (CAPRI)
 - Provides read-only access to national EHRs
 - See <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/CAPRI-VistAWeb/CAPRI.htm> for more information
- VistAWeb
 - Provides read-only access to national EHRs
 - See <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/CAPRI-VistAWeb/VistAWeb.htm> for more information

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Where to go for more help

Criteria for Use of VA Data in Research

- Employment status
- Proposed use
- Data Steward requirements
- Sensitivity of data
- Physical location of data

Approval for Research Data Access is Multi-Departmental

VHA Local
Management

CUPS Point of
Contact or ISO

Data Steward

VHA Privacy
Office

VHA Security
Liaison Office

VHA Office of
Research and
Development

Data Access Requirements are Determined by the Data

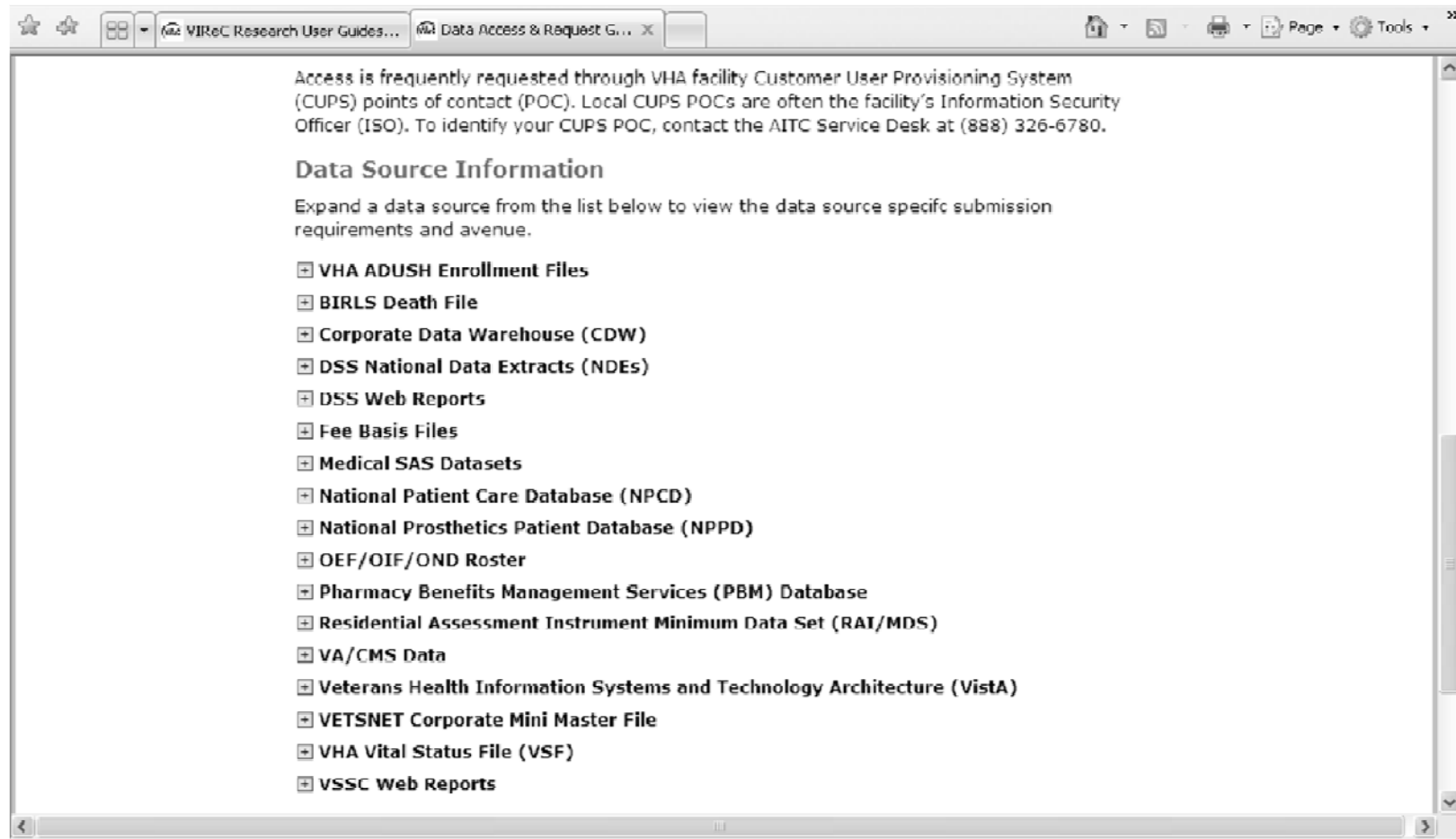
- National Data Systems (NDS)
 - Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW)
 - Vital Status Data
 - MedSAS (real SSN)
 - DSS (real SSN)
- VA Information Resource Center (VIREC)
 - VA/CMS Data
- Pharmacy Benefits Management Services
 - Pharmacy Benefits Management Data (PBM)

VIReC Data Access & Request Guide

The screenshot displays the VA Information Resource Center (VIReC) website. At the top, the header includes the text "UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS" and the VA seal. A search bar is located in the top right corner with the text "Search All VA Web Pages" and a "Search" button. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "Veteran Services", "Business", "About VA", "Media Room", "Locations", and "Contact Us". The main content area is titled "VA INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER (VIReC)" and features a sidebar on the left with links such as "VIReC Home", "VA/CMS Home", "About Us", "New Users of VA Data", "Data Transition to CDW", "News & Updates", "FAQs", "Acronyms", and "HelpDesk". The main content area is titled "Data Access & Request Guide" and includes an "Overview" section with the text: "VIReC's Data Access and Request Guide provides an overview of available access options and methods for submitting requests for data access. In addition to describing the access requirements for select data sources, VIReC provides an overview of the different access portals and processing platforms available to researchers. VIReC's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)" page provides quick answers to common questions about accessing VA data." Below this is a "Submission Guidelines" section with a "Method" subsection. The "Method" section states: "The method researchers use to request data access depends on the use of the data and the data source. The appropriate avenue for submitting an individual data request is determined by" followed by a bulleted list: "the use of the data (e.g. R&D/IRB approved VA research project or preparatory to research);", "the identifier requested (real or scrambled SSN);", and "the data level requested (local, VISN, and/or National);". On the right side of the page, there is a "General Resources" section with a list of links: "Data Access", "Data Sources", "Data Topics", and "Products & Services".

www.virec.research.va.gov/Access/Access-Req-Guide.htm

Data Source Specific Access Information

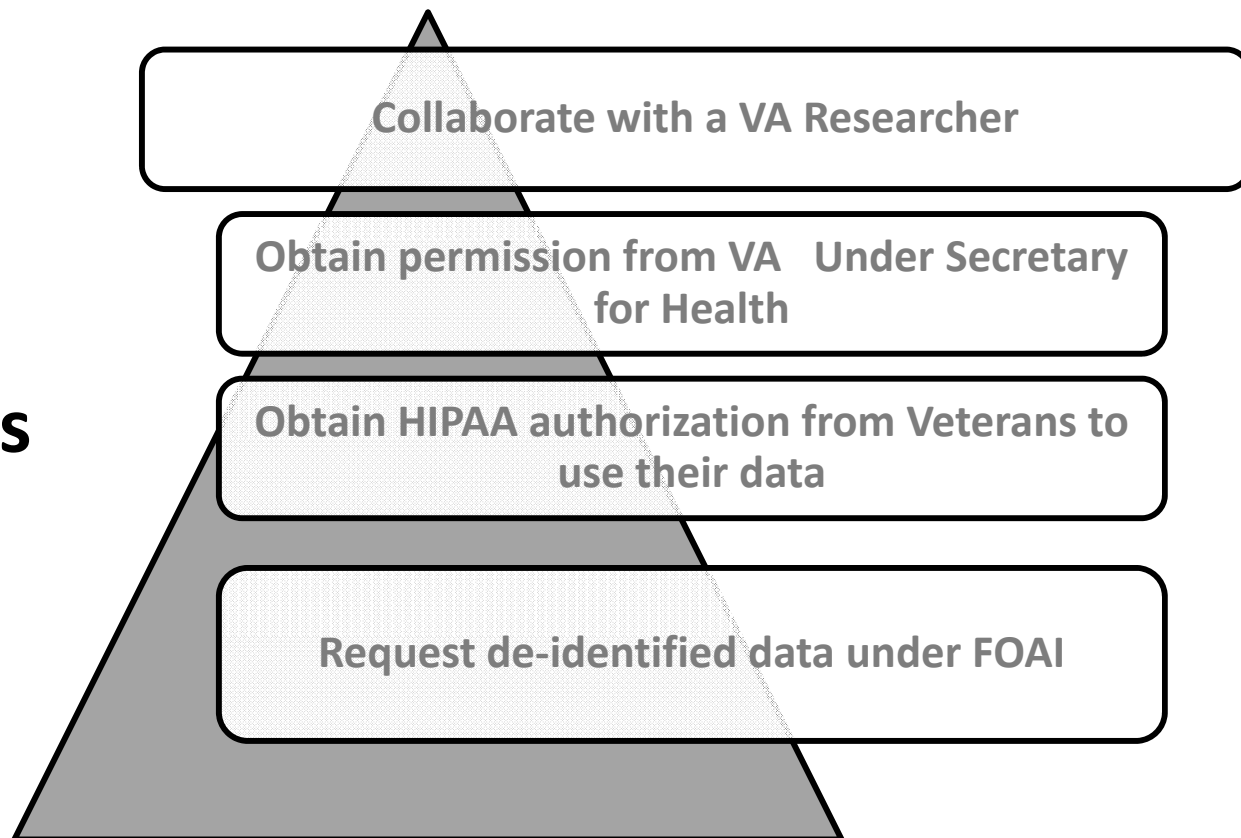


www.virec.research.va.gov/Access/Access-Req-Guide.htm

Access to VA Data by Non-VA Researchers

**Data containing Protected Health Information (PHI) restricted
to VA researchers**

Exceptions



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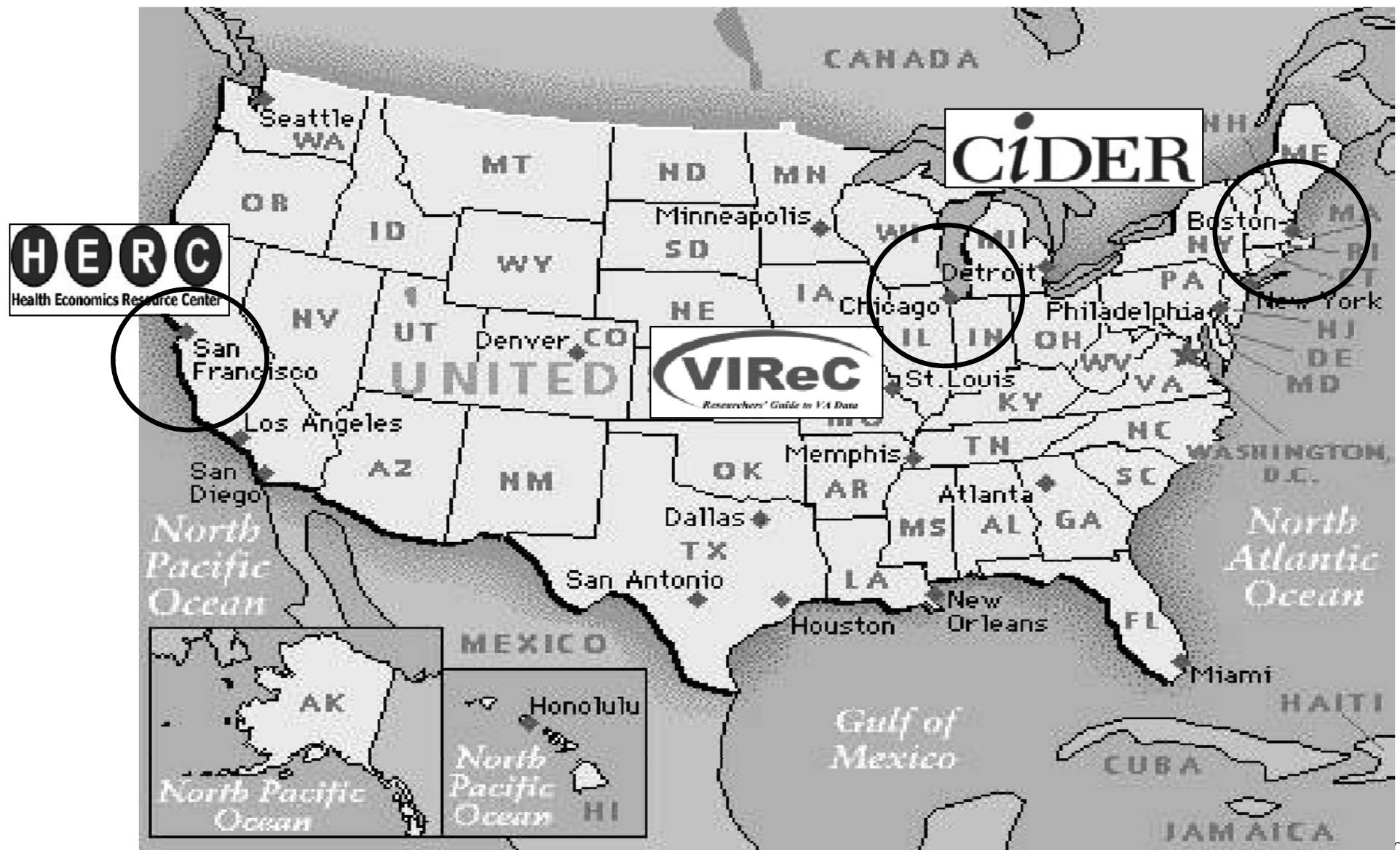


Where to go for more help

Obtaining Help

- HSRData Listserv
 - Join at VIREC's Intranet Web site
 - Exchange of current information, ideas, questions, and answers about data and informatics issues affecting VA research
 - Discussion among close to 700 VA only researchers, data stewards, managers and other users
 - Searchable archive of past discussions

Obtaining Help



Obtaining Help

- VIREC Website
 - <http://www.virec.research.va.gov>
 - Research User Guides (RUGs)
 - Variable-level information
 - Technical Reports
 - Web-site “Toolkit for New Users of VA Data”
 - Monthly Data Issue Briefs
- Help Desk
 - virec@va.gov
 - (708) 202-2413

Upcoming Database and Methods

Seminars

- Inpatient and Outpatient MedSAS Datasets
- VA Medicare Data
- Details of Requesting VA Data for Research
- DSS National Laboratory Data
- Outpatient Pharmacy Data
- Assessing Race and Ethnicity
- Measuring Co-morbidities
- Using CAPRI and VistAWeb
- VA Vital Status Dataset
- Corporate Data Warehouse Data*

*A set of separate sessions on CDW data will be given

Questions?

Next session:

October 29, 2012

Accessing Inpatient and Outpatient VA Health Care Use

Denise M. Hynes, MPH, PhD, RN