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VIREC UPDATES

1. **New Decision Support System Frequently Asked Question**

A new frequently asked question (FAQ) on laboratory records in the Decision Support System (DSS) National Data Extracts (NDEs) has been posted to the VIREC Web site:

- Q.** Should every laboratory record in the DSS Laboratory (LAB) National Data Extract (NDE) have a corresponding result record in the Laboratory Results (LAR) NDE?
- A.** Not necessarily. There are a number of reasons why LAB records do not always have a corresponding LAR record and vice-versa.

The DSS FAQs Web page on the VIREC Web site provides more in-depth information on the relationship between DSS LAB and LAR NDEs as well as other FAQs that may be of interest to VA researchers. See <http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/DSS/DSSfaqs.htm>.

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2. VIREC Tip of the Month

Ever missed a VIREC cyberseminar or wondered what a previous seminar was about? VIREC Database and Methods and Clinical Informatics Cyberseminar Series Archives contain valuable information on accessing and using VA data as well as expert discussions on key issues in clinical informatics. These free and easily accessible presentations are available twenty-four hours a day, seven-days a week on the VIREC Web site in audio, slide, and video formats.

- Database and Methods
Archive: http://www.virec.research.va.gov/EducationResources/Seminars/Databases-Methods_Archive_2009.htm
- Clinical Informatics Archive: http://www.virec.research.va.gov/EducationResources/Seminars/Clinical-Informatics_Arch_2010.htm

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DATA & INFORMATION SYSTEMS

3. VA Vital Status Master File Updates

The Vital Status Master File SAS Dataset produced on 04/30/10 has been updated with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) FY07-FY08 data. Four new variables were added and the labels on two existing variables have been modified.

The four new variables are the submission and enrollment status indicators for the years 2007 and 2008 (CMS_IND07 and CMS_IND08) and a new date and its data quality indicator (CMS_UNADJ_LAST_DT and CMS_UNADJ_LAST_DT_IND). This new date is the last claim date for CMS including durable medical equipment (DME) claims but excluding unpaid CARRIER claims. It will not be used to determine the last activity date on the Vital Status Mini dataset.

The label on the variables CMS_LAST_DT and CMS_LAST_DT_IND were modified to more accurately reflect their contents. The new labels are 'LAST MEDICARE CLAIM DATE EXCL DME & UNPAID CARRIER' and 'LAST MEDICARE CLAIM DATE EXCL DME & UNP CARRIER IND' respectively. The CMS_LAST_DT is the last claim date for CMS excluding both DME and unpaid CARRIER claims. This date is used to determine the last activity date on the Vital Status Mini dataset.

More information about the VA Vital Status Master File is available on the VIREC Web site at <http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/VitalStatus/VitalStatus.htm>.

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4. Health and Human Services Community Health Data Initiative

The Department of Health and Human Services has partnered with the Institute of Medicine in launching the Community Health Data Initiative. Under this initiative, HHS will provide to the public, free of charge and without any intellectual property constraint, a Community Health Data Set harvested from across the Department. This dataset will comprise hundreds of measures of health care quality, cost, access and public health as well as new national, state, and regional-level data made available by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The Initiative is intended, as stated in the HHS press release, to "drive innovation and lead to the creation of new applications and tools to improve the health of Americans." More information and useful links may be found at <http://www.hhs.gov/open/datasets/communityhealthdata.html>.

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EDUCATION

5. VIREC Clinical Informatics Cyberseminar Series

Informatics Support for Depression Care Management

Lisa Rubenstein, MD

Susan Vivell, MBA, PhD, MA

Presented Tuesday, June 15 – 12:00 pm (ET)

Lisa Rubenstein, MD, and Susan Vivell, MBA, PhD, MA, presented *Informatics Support for Depression Care Management* on June 15, 2010, at 12:00 pm ET.

Dr Rubenstein is Professor of Medicine at VA Greater Los Angeles and University of California, Los Angeles, and a Senior Natural Scientist at RAND. Dr Rubenstein directs the VA Health Services Research & Development Center of Excellence for the Study of Healthcare Provider Behavior, and is a practicing general internist and geriatrician.

Dr Vivell is an Educational Psychologist and Health Systems Officer at the Center for the Study of Health Care Provider Behavior, Health Services Research and Development Center of Excellence, Sepulveda, CA. Dr. Vivell specializes in implementation and quality improvement studies, and has been the TIDES implementation manager for the past 6 years.

VIREC Clinical Informatics Cyberseminars take place on the third Tuesday of each month at 12:00 pm (ET) via LiveMeeting. Researchers may visit the VIREC Web site to access an archived presentation or to register for this seminar at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/EducationResources/Seminars/Cyberseminars.htm>. E-mail questions to VIREC's Clinical Informatics Cyberseminar Coordinator, Joanne Stevens at Joanne.Stevens@va.gov.

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6. VIREC Database and Methods Cyberseminar Series

Research Access to VA Data

Denise M. Hynes, PhD, MPH, RN

Linda Kok, MA

Monday, August 2 – 1:00 pm (ET)

Denise M. Hynes, PhD, MPH, RN and Linda Kok, MA, will present *Research Access to VA Data*, Monday, August 2, 2010. Dr. Hynes is Director of the VA Information Resource Center (VIREC) and a Research Career Scientist at the Center for Management of Complex Chronic Care (CMC3), based at the Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital. Dr. Hynes holds a joint position as Visiting Professor of Public Health, Health Promotion Research Section, Department of Medicine, College of Medicine, and Research Scientist, School of Public Health, University of Illinois, Chicago, IL. Linda Kok is Technical and Data Security and Privacy Liaison for VIREC.

VIREC Database and Methods Cyberseminars take place on the first Monday of each month at 1:00 pm (ET) via LiveMeeting. Researchers may visit the VIREC Web site to register for this seminar or to access an archived presentation at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/EducationResources/Seminars/Cyberseminars.htm>.

E-mail questions to VIREC's Database and Methods Cyberseminar Coordinator, Melissa Brown at Melissa.Brown3@va.gov.

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CONFERENCES & CALL FOR POSTERS/ PRESENTATIONS

7. Health Services Research & Development Service Field-Based Meetings

The VA's Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) is providing support for several field-based meetings in FY 2010 including:

- Quality Improvement in Parallel Circuits: VA System Redesign, Operational Systems Engineering, and Implementation Research, July 14-15, Indianapolis, IN
- Women's Health, July 15-16, Washington, DC
- Implementation Science, July 19-20, Denver, CO
- Equity, September 13-14, Boston, MA

For further information on these meetings and support provided, visit the HSR&D Web site at <http://vaww.hsr.d.research.va.gov/meetings/2010/>.

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8. VHA eHealth University 2010

The 2010 Veterans Health Administration (VHA), eHealth University (VeHU) conference will be held in Las Vegas, NV, August 10-12. VeHU highlights innovations towards patient care through its numerous training sessions and provides education on the VHA Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA), and VHA clinical informatics products. The 2010 training conference offers classes, poster presentations, exhibits, networking opportunities and other events including a VA Health Information Management (VA-HIM) day and a Medical Informatics Workshop.

VeHU plans to broadcast as many conference sessions as possible for those who cannot attend the conference in person. For further details, or to register for this conference, visit the VeHU Web site at <http://vaww.vehu.va.gov/>.

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9. AcademyHealth 2010 Annual Research Meeting

Registration for the AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting (ARM) is open until June 22, 2010. The conference will be held in Boston, MA from June 27–29, 2010. The ARM brings together health services researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. Meeting topics addressed include emerging research issues, current health policy, research funding priorities, and quality of care. Further information is available on the AcademyHealth Web site

at <http://www.academyhealth.org/events/content.cfm?ItemNumber=882&navItemNumber=529>.

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10. Healthcare Data Warehousing Association 2010 Annual Conference

The Healthcare Data Warehousing Association (HDWA) is holding its annual conference Tuesday and Wednesday, September 14 and 15, 2010. The host of this year's conference is Duke Medicine in Durham, NC. HDWA is calling for posters and presentations on healthcare data warehousing. Submissions are due June 14, 2010. Visit the HDWA Web site to register as a member, and learn more about the annual conference and call for posters and presentations at www.hdwa.org.

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VIREC *Data Issues Brief*: a monthly newsletter published by the [VA Information Resource Center \(VIREC\)](#) for the purpose of informing and updating VA researchers on current and pending happenings and changes regarding health data, databases, and medical informatics.

Intended Audience: VA researchers and staff

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Previous Issues: An archive of this newsletter can be found on VIREC's Web site at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/References/DataIssuesBrief/DIB.htm>.

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