



VA INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER

Data Issues Brief

September 2010

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VIREC UPDATES

1. VIREC's VA/CMS Data for Research-New Information about Data

Looking for information about the VA/CMS datasets available through VIREC? Please visit VIREC's updated web pages at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/VA-CMS/VACMSavail-doc.htm>. Updates include the addition of counts and proc contents, documentation about variable changes, and data dictionaries for Medicare and Medicaid datasets.

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2. HSRData-L Listserv: Recent Topics

The HSRData-L Listserv is a forum for VA researchers and data users to exchange information, ideas, questions, and answers about VA data and informatics. For those who may have missed [last month's listserv discussion](#), some of the topics include:

- Individuals with same SCRSSN
- Identifying lab tests by NLT and LOINC codes in Clinical Case Registry Data
- Unique enrollees or users

HSRData-L is maintained by VIREC and is available to researchers and data users with a "va.gov" e-mail address. To subscribe to the listserv, visit the VIREC Intranet Web site at http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/Support/HSRData-L_Listserv.htm.

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DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

3. Person Class Code Additions

Three new Person Class codes have been added to the VISTA New Person File and appear in the Medical SAS Datasets provider type fields beginning in the 4th quarter of Fiscal Year 2010. Provider type is reported in the Outpatient Event Dataset and the Inpatient Encounter Dataset in the ten variable fields, PROV1-PROV10. For more information on this variable please see the *VIREC Research User Guide: FY2006 VHA Medical SAS® Outpatient Datasets*, available at <http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/References/RUG/RUG.htm>. For more information on Person Class and the VHA Person Class File Taxonomy, see VHA Directive 2005-059, available at http://www1.va.gov/vhpublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1355.

The three new codes are:

- 010407, Health psychologist: The clinical psychologist focuses on physical health problems.
- 130212, Mastectomy fitter: Individual trained in fitting and adjusting of breast prostheses.
- 130313, Pedorthist: Individual trained in the treatment of conditions of the foot, ankle, and adjusting pedorthic devices (footwear to solve foot or lower limb problems).

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4. Quarter 4: Changes to CPT (Current Procedural Terminology, CPT-4) Codes and CPT Modifiers

Changes were implemented to the CPT -4 and CPT -4 modifier code lists on the AITC mainframe in July. The changes include additions, deactivations, and revisions to 29 Level II HCPCS codes and will be reflected in values found in the CPT1 to CPT20 and CPTMODA to CPTMODC variable fields in the Medical SAS Outpatient Event and Inpatient Encounter Datasets. Specific changes may be reviewed at the NPCD Audit Trail of Changes, available at http://vaww.aac.va.gov/npcd/AuditTrailView.php?s_TYPE=&s_MESSAGE=cpt (search on Task Key word CPT). For more information about the CPT variable fields in the Medical SAS Datasets, see the *VIREC Research User Guide: FY2006 VHA Medical SAS® Outpatient Datasets*, available at <http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/References/RUG/RUG.htm>.

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5. Quarterly DCG data are available in the AITC

Diagnostic Cost Group (DCG) SAS files are now available at the AITC on a quarterly basis, with each quarterly file covering the previous 12-month period. Fiscal Year 2010 Q1 (i.e. FY 2009 Q2 to FY 2010 Q1), FY 2010 Q2, and FY 2010 Q3 data are now ready with file names:

- RMTPRD.MED.DCG.RISK.SMART231.FY10Q1
- RMTPRD.MED.DCG.RISK.SMART231.FY10Q2
- RMTPRD.MED.DCG.RISK.SMART231.FY10Q3

Annual DCG data are available at the AITC starting from FY98. The quarterly updates provide more up-to-date data to capture new patients' DCG status.

The VHA Support Services Center (VSSC) produces the DCG risk scores. The inputs for DCG risk scores are patient age, gender, and 12 months' diagnoses obtained from VHA's SAS administrative data files (inpatient and outpatient, including Non-VA and Fee). Each patient's demographic and clinical data are then grouped into Hierarchical Conditional Categories (HCCs) and weights that were developed from a Medicare population are applied, resulting in the patient's overall clinically weighted risk score.

VHA researchers use DCG scores in their studies to assess management efficiencies, develop capitation methods and ratings, examine resource use variation between conditions, identify high-risk patients, measure quality of care, predict clinical outcomes and resource consumption, etc. Further information on DCG risk scores is available in the December 2007 *VIREC Data Issues Brief* at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/References/DataIssuesBrief/2007/DIB-0712er.pdf>. Researchers requiring more information can send questions to sophie.lo@va.gov at VSSC.

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EDUCATION

6. VIREC Clinical Informatics Cyberseminar Series

Computerized Interventions to Improve Prescribing Practices

Sylvain DeLisle, MD, MBA

September 21st, 12pm eastern

Dr. DeLisle is an Associate Professor of Medicine and Associate Chief of Staff for Performance Improvement at the Baltimore VA Medical Center. Dr. DeLisle attempts to integrate informatics tools within processes of care, so as to improve health services quality and performance. From a pharmacy standpoint, he has orchestrated the development of specialized clinical reminders in CPRS to interpose drug-specific criteria-for-use at the time of single prescriptions. These so-called "CDS-eRx" have been created for over 20 medications, and used over 90,000 times in the last 8 years. The CDS-eRx project, which was awarded the 2004 Grace Hopper Government Technology Leadership Award for Scientific Advancement (<http://www.govexec.com/features/1204-01/1204-01gtlas1.htm>), is now beginning to be methodically evaluated through HSR&D-funded research.

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7. VeHU 2010 Presentations Now Available

Free downloadable audio and video files of each featured speaker's presentation at the VA eHealth University (VeHU) 2010 conference are now available. VeHU 2010 was held August 10-12 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The conference highlighted innovations for patient care through hands-on classes, breakout sessions, software demonstrations, exhibits, networking and other special events with the goal of maximizing the use of VHA's Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) at every facility. At VeHU, the Office of Information showcased new IT developments and plans for future development. For more information about this conference and access to these files please visit the VeHU 2010 website at <http://vaww.vehu.va.gov/vehu/podcast/2010/>.

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CONFERENCES

8. Healthcare Data Warehousing Association Annual Conference September 14-15

The Healthcare Data Warehousing Association (HDWA) will hold its annual conference September 14-15, 2010. The conference, “Data Warehousing - Adding Value to Healthcare”, will be hosted by Duke Medicine in Durham, North Carolina. HDWA serves as a forum for healthcare organizations planning or engaged in data warehousing projects to share ideas and lessons learned in healthcare data warehousing and business intelligence. For information about the HDWA organization and the conference, go to <http://hdwa.org/hdwa/home/>.

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9. National Association of Health Data Organizations Annual Conference October 13-14

The National Association of Health Data Organizations (NAHDO) will hold its 25th Annual Conference, “Health Care Data: The Silver Bullet for Reforming the Health Care System”, in Salt Lake City, Utah, October 13-14, 2010. NAHDO is a national, not-for-profit membership organization dedicated to improving health care through the collection, analysis, dissemination, public availability, and use of health data. For more information researchers should go to NAHDO’s Web site at <http://www.nahdo.org/AnnualConference/tabid/170/Default.aspx>.

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10. AMIA 2010 Annual Symposium November 13-17

The American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) will hold its Annual Symposium this year in Washington D.C. from November 13-17, 2010. The theme of this year’s symposium is “Biomedical and Health Informatics, Key to Quality Care and Scientific Progress.” For information and to register, researchers should access the AMIA Web site at <http://www.amia.org/>.

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VIREC TIP OF THE MONTH

11. Do You Know in Which VA Office of Information & Technology (OI&T) Region Your VISN Resides?

The OI&T Field Office (<http://vaww.itfo.portal.va.gov/about/default.aspx>) has a map of Regions 1 through 4 showing the VISNs covered under each:

- Region 1: VISNs 18-22
- Region 2: VISNs 12, 15-17 and VISN 23
- Region 3: VISNs 6-11
- Region 4: VISNs 1-5

The Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) already includes some data from the Regions 1 and 4 Regional Data Warehouses and data from Regions 2 and 3 are targeted to be available in 2011. If you’re planning a retrospective data study, check VIREC’s web information

at <http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/CDW/CDW.htm> and the CDW Web site

at <http://vaww.cdw.med.va.gov/default.aspx> to learn what types of data will be extracted from the Regional Data Warehouses and available for research from the CDW.

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Intended Audience: VA researchers, data users, and staff

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Previous Issues of the *Data Issues Brief* are available on the VIREC Web site at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/References/DataIssuesBrief/DIB.htm>.

Intranet Versions: Contact the VIREC Help Desk at (708) 202–2413.

Contact Information: Submit comments, suggestions, or any newsworthy topics unaddressed in previous issues to virec@va.gov or contact the VIREC Help Desk at (708) 202–2413.