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VIREC UPDATES

1. New Historic DSS Clinic Stop Code Documentation

The Decision Support Office (DSO) has made available a historic listing of Decision Support System (DSS) Identifiers also known as Clinic Stop Codes. This document provides clinic stop code activation and de-activation dates as well as restriction type (primary, secondary, pair) dates. This document is available on the VIREC website at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/DSS/DSS-HistStpCds.xls>.

Researchers can find more in-depth information about DSS Identifiers on the DSS Intranet website and in the VIREC DSS Research User Guide at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/References/RUG/RUG.htm>.

2. SAS® Proc Contents for VHA ADUSH Monthly Enrollment File Datasets

SAS® Proc Contents for the fiscal year 2008 and 2009 (FY08 and FY09) VHA Assistant Deputy Undersecretary for Health for Policy and Planning (ADUSH) Monthly Enrollment File datasets are available on the VIREC website. In addition, SAS® Proc Contents for FY02 – FY07 datasets have been updated to reflect full-year record counts. SAS® Proc Contents are descriptions of SAS® datasets that include variable type, length, format, and labels.

The SAS® Proc Contents for the VHA ADUSH Monthly Enrollment File datasets are available on the VIREC website at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/Enrollment/EnrollmentDocumentation.htm>.

3. 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, subject lines include:

- ICD-10
- Possible difference in definitions between VA outpatient encounters and Medicare outpatient encounters
- Testing sets for VA data

To view these and other archived discussions, visit the HSRData-L Listserv VA Intranet Web site.

VIREC maintains HSRData-L, which is available to researchers and data users with a "va.gov" e-mail address. To subscribe to the listserv, visit the VIREC VA Intranet website.

DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

4. CPT Codes Revised and Updated

In early February, the Austin Information Technology Center (AITC) revised and updated the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes for Quarter 2. These changes include:

- (1) 265 new codes,
- (2) 193 revised codes, and
- (3) 389 deactivated codes.

This update applies to the SAS® catalog file, MDPPRD.SYS.NAT.LIB.MAINFILE. One of the four members is CPTNAM10, which contain outpatient CPT codes and descriptions. The updates typically occur every quarter, but could be delayed if the patch is not installed at all facilities.

5. Mental Health Treatment Specialty Code Update

In a previous *Data Issues Brief* (July 2010), National Data Systems (NDS) announced a change to treating specialty codes for mental health services, implemented June 1, 2010. Due to difficulties in implementation of the software patch at some facilities, and in order to facilitate a smooth end-of-FY10 close out, NDS removed PTF edits, which had been put in place to implement the patch. The edits were removed on October 13, 2010, to avoid rejections of VistA record transmission to the National Patient Care Database (NPCD).

Researchers who used Medical SAS® FY10 datasets may observe inactive Mental Health Treating Specialties (examples: 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 38). NDS indicates that a small number of records from VistA sites with suffix BU-BX and B1-B4 may contain these inactive codes. NDS, HIM, and Product Support are currently identifying steps to facilitate corrections at the site, which will allow the reinstatement of the edits in Austin. A new date for implementation of Austin edits has not been set. Use of final, fiscal year datasets is recommended.

6. Corporate Data Warehouse Update

This is the first in a new addition to the *DIB*, a periodic update on data that are available to researchers from the Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW). While VIREC presents in-depth information about CDW on its website, the status of available data is continually changing. This brief will provide updated information on national level data that are complete and available to researchers from CDW.

Currently, researchers can request national data from the following domains: [1] vital signs; [2] health factors (non-standardized); [3] immunizations; [4] primary care management module (PCMM); [5] outpatient pharmacy; [6] non-VA meds; [7] lab, chemistry (includes hematology); [8] NPCD outpatient encounters; [9] beneficiary travel; [10] surgery; [11] prosthetics; [12] equipment inventory; and [13] adverse reactions. Also available from the CDW are [14] DSS NDEs (all NDEs consolidated in CDW across VISNs and time) and patient and staff information, including restricted information accessed with real SSN approval (e.g., patient contact information, staff identification).

For more information about CDW visit VIREC's website at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/CDW/CDW.htm>.

Instructions for requesting CDW data are on the NDS VA Intranet website.

7. 2009 VA/CMS MDS and OASIS Data Now Available from VIREC

The VA/CMS Data for Research Project is pleased to announce that calendar year 2009 Patient Assessment Data are now available. These data include Outcome and Assessment Information Set (OASIS) on patients receiving care from Medicare or Medicaid certified home health agencies (HHA) and Long Term Care Minimum Data Set (MDS) on residents of long-term care facilities certified to participate in Medicare or Medicaid. Data are available for Veterans and non-Veterans. These data are available on request for VA researchers with approved projects.

Information about these data can be found at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/VA-CMS/Assessment-Data/AssessDataDescription.htm>.

Information about the VA/CMS request process is found at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/VA-CMS/VACMSrequest-process.htm>.

VIREC will contact researchers approved for the 2009 MDS or OASIS to arrange transfer of the data to the research project.

EDUCATION

8. VIREC Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminar Series

Upcoming Cyber Seminars

User Perceptions of Patient Portals in an Academic Medical Center

April 19th, 12pm Eastern

Bonnie Wakefield, PhD, RN, FAAN & Douglas S. Wakefield, PhD

Bonnie Wakefield is Clinical Coordinator for the VA e-Health QUERI and serves as Section Editor, Technology Innovations, for the *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* and Editorial Board member for the journal, *Telemedicine and e-Health*.

Douglas S. Wakefield directs the Center for Health Care Quality (CHCQ) at the University of Missouri and is a professor of Health Management and Informatics. Dr Wakefield has secondary appointments in the Departments of Internal Medicine and Family and Community Medicine as well as the Sinclair School of Nursing.

Moving Telemedicine from “Research to Just the Way We Do Business”

May 17th, 12pm Eastern

David C. Aron, MD, MS

David Aron, is Associate Director of the VA’s QUERI Center for Implementation Practice and Research Support (CIPRS), Co-Clinical Coordinator of the Diabetes QUERI, ACOS for Education at the Cleveland VAMC, and Professor of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University.

Recently Archived Presentations

Using AUDIT-C Alcohol Screening Data in VA Research: Interpretation, Strengths, Limitations, & Sources

Researchers may visit VIREC’s website to register for a seminar or to access archived presentations at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/EducationResources/Seminars/Cyberseminars.htm>. E-mail questions to VIREC’s Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminar Coordinator, Joanne Stevens, at Joanne.Stevens@va.gov.

9. VIREC Database and Methods Cyber Seminar Series

Upcoming Seminars

Improving Mortality Ascertainment using the VA Vital Status Dataset

May 2nd, 1pm Eastern

Noreen Arnold, MS

Noreen Arnold is a Social Science Analyst at VIREC.

Recently Archived Presentations

Using VA Corporate Data Warehouse to Assess Vitals

Researchers may visit VIREC’s website to register for a seminar or to access archived presentations at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/EducationResources/Seminars/Cyberseminars.htm>. E-mail questions to VIREC’s Database and Methods Cyber Seminar Coordinator, Melissa Brown, at Melissa.Brown3@va.gov.

CONFERENCES & CALLS FOR ABSTRACTS

10. Society for Medical Decision Making 2011 Annual Meeting Call for Abstracts: Feb 6 – May 6

The Society for Medical Decision Making (SMDM) is holding its 2011 Annual Meeting—From Evidence to Decision Making: Role of Behavioral Economics in Medicine—in Chicago, IL, from October 22 – 26, 2011. The Society is accepting abstracts for both short course proposals and oral/ poster abstracts from Monday, February 7, 2011, through Friday, May 6, 2011. Relevant topics include administrative database and outcomes research in Applied Health Economics, Services, and Policy Research.

For more information, visit the SMDM's website at <http://www.smdm.org/2011meeting/index.shtml>.

VIREC TIP OF THE MONTH

11. What is VAST?

The Veteran Affairs Site Tracking (VAST) database is a central inventory of facilities that comprise VA's health care system. The VAST System was established to provide accurate and consistent information regarding the number of VHA service sites and the types of services each provides.

VAST contains VHA service sites, identifying their primary service and additional services available at the facilities (e.g., VA Community Living Center, residential rehabilitation treatment program) as well as station numbers, historical information on station number activation, parent-child relationships, facility names and addresses.

The VAST is maintained by the Planning Systems Support Group (PSSG), a field unit under Enrollment and Forecasting, VHA Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary Health for Policy & Planning. The data are available for download as a comma-separated values (CSV) formatted file.

For more information, visit PSSG's Intranet website. A record layout is also available on PSSG's Intranet site.

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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Intranet Versions: Call the VIREC Help Desk at 708-202-2413.

Contact Information: For comments, suggestions, or newsworthy topics that have not been addressed, call 708-202-2413 or send a message to virec@va.gov.

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