

VA INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER

Data Issues Brief

May 2011

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VIREC UPDATES

1. New Research User Guide (RUG) to the VHA Medical SAS[®] Datasets

VIREC has published a new research user guide detailing Medical SAS[®] outpatient and inpatient encounters datasets for FY 2009. The companion inpatient datasets RUG was released in February.

The *VIREC Research User Guide: VHA Medical SAS[®] Fiscal Year 2009 Outpatient Datasets and Inpatient Encounters Dataset* is available on the VIREC website at

<http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/Medical-SAS-Datasets/MedSAS-Outpt-RUG/MedSAS-RUG-Outpt.htm>.

2. New Tutorial on Transferring Data to and from the Austin Information Technology Center

VIREC's new tutorial, Transferring Data to and from the Austin Information Technology Center, provides step-by-step guidance on downloading data to and from the Austin Information Technology Center (AITC) mainframe computer and uses examples to illustrate key SAS[®] procedures. This tutorial complements other VIREC tutorials that assist researchers in using the AITC mainframe for the first time and using Job Control Language for running a SAS[®] job at AITC.

The tutorials are available on the VIREC VA Intranet website.

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-9 vs. CPT procedures code
- Old station number
- DSS NDE [about pharmacy and lab costs]

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

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

DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

4. Mid-Year Changes to DSS Identifiers

The Decision Support Office (DSO) has announced FY2011 mid-year changes to DSS identifiers. DSS identifiers, also known as clinic stop codes, are important to researchers using both DSS National Data Extracts (NDEs) and Medical SAS[®] datasets. These changes include activation of two new identifiers, one each for Brachytherapy Treatment and Grant and Per Diem programs, which support homeless Veterans. Other updates include 11 changes in definitions, two changes in restriction types, one inactivated code, and seven codes removed from the national list (but remaining on a DSS-use-only list).

Documentation of these changes can be found on the DSS VA Intranet website at (see link to "FY11 Mid-Year DSS Identifier Changes").

These updates as well as past changes are included in the new *DSS Historical Clinic Stop Codes* document on the VIREC website at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/DSS/DSSdocumentation.htm>.

5. New Provider Types Activated

There are six new provider types in use in the VHA. The new classifications are: Psychologist; Lactation Consultant, Non-RN; Clinical Ethicist; Mastectomy Fitter; Pedorthist; and Electrodiagnostic Medicine. Each VHA provider's classification is stored in the VistA New Person file (#200), Person Class field, and then extracted to multiple VHA datasets including Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM), Decision Support System (DSS), and National Patient Care Database (NPCD).

These updates reflect additions to the Healthcare Provider Taxonomy (HCPT) code set maintained by the National Uniform Claim Committee. National Data Systems has updated its Person Class Taxonomy document, which includes the VHA person class code values with descriptions, NPCD code start and end dates and the HCPT codes. That document is available on the NPCD VA Intranet website.

For more information about provider type fields in national datasets, see the following research user guides on the VIREC website at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/References/RUG/RUG.htm>.

VIREC Research User Guide: VHA Decision Support System Clinical National Data Extracts

VIREC Research User Guide: VHA Pharmacy Prescription Data, 2nd Edition

VIREC Research User Guide: Fiscal Year 2009 VHA Medical SAS[®] Outpatient Datasets & Inpatient Encounter Dataset

6. The Data Architecture Repository (DAR) Version 1 is Available

The Data Architecture Repository (DAR) Version 1 has been released. The DAR is an enterprise-wide metadata repository. Metadata is information about database contents and the DAR Version 1 contains such useful metadata as a VistA data dictionary (still evolving), a searchable version of the VHA Corporate Databases Monograph encyclopedia of VHA databases, and a data inventory of the VA/DoD Identity Repository (VADIR).

To access the DAR visit the VA Intranet.

Please report problems and suggestions to improve the portal to DAR.VBACO@va.gov.

7. VeHU Courses Available as Internet-Based Training

MyVeHU Campus is a Web-based pilot project that offers access to Electronic Health Record training tools created from past VA eHealth University conferences. MyVeHU Campus officially launched April 26, 2011. Researchers engaged in informatics development for the VA might be interested in experiencing the Web-based training courses, PowerPoint presentations, and "on-demand" viewing of past VeHU conference sessions. MyVeHU Campus is sponsored by the Office of Health Information and the Office of Informatics and Analytics.

To access MyVeHU Campus visit <http://www.MyVeHUCampus.com>.

For questions about MyVeHU Campus e-mail support@myvehucampus.com.

8. DCG FY2011 QTR2 File is Available at the AITC

FY2011 QTR2 DCG data, RMTPRD.MED.DCG.RISK.SMART231.FY11Q2, is now available on the mainframe at the Austin Information Technology Center (AITC).

Further information on DCG risk scores is available in the July 2010, VIREC *Data Issues Brief* at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/References/DataIssuesBrief/2010/DIB-1007er.pdf>.

For more information, contact Sophie Lo at Sophie.lo@va.gov or Mei-Ling Shen at Mei-ling.shen@va.gov at VSSC.

9. Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) Update

The Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) has a new SharePoint site. On the homepage, the CDW Domain Priority & Status screen displays a list of CDW data domains and target dates for their inclusion in the CDW. It will be updated weekly. Currently available domains are indicated by green circles in either the CDW Raw or CDW Product columns.

The new CDW SharePoint site is still evolving. The VA Office of Information & Technology and VHA National Data Systems office are jointly dedicating resources to significantly expand CDW metadata on the site. VIREC will inform researchers about additions to the new CDW SharePoint site as they become available.

To access the new SharePoint site visit CDW's VA Intranet website.

EDUCATION

10. VIREC Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminars

Upcoming Cyber Seminars

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 at Case Western Reserve University.

Finding Wisdom in the Information: The VA Clinical Assessment, Reporting, and Tracking (CART) Program Approach

June 21st, 12pm Eastern

Tamara L. Box

Tamara Box is Lead Health IT for the CART Program and is a team member on two of Secretary Shinseki's Transformational Initiatives, Health Care Efficiencies and Health Informatics.

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.

11. VIREC Database and Methods Cyber Seminar Series

Upcoming Seminars

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

June 6th, 1pm Eastern

Denise M. Hynes, RN, MPH, PhD

Denise 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) at the Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital.

Recently Archived Presentations

Measuring Laboratory Use and Results Using the VA DSS National Lab Data

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

12. AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting 2011

The 2011 Annual Research Meeting (ARM) will be held June 12-14 at the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle, WA. The ARM brings together health services researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. Conference themes include but are not limited to health information technology, methods papers, and quality and efficiency in measurement.

For more information or to register for this conference visit AcademyHealth's website at <http://www.academyhealth.org/events/content.cfm?ItemNumber=882&navItemNumber=529>.

13. Healthcare Data Warehousing Association Annual Conference 2011 Call

The 2011 Healthcare Data Warehousing Association (HDWA) annual conference will be held September 13-15 in San Diego, CA. The host of this year's conference is Sharp Healthcare. HDWA is calling for posters and presentations on healthcare data warehousing. Submissions are due by June 10, 2010.

For more information or to register for this conference visit at HDWA's website at <http://www.hdwa.org>.

VIREC TIP OF THE MONTH

14. VHA Data Tutorial: Navigating the VSSC

Navigating the VSSC is an online tutorial available on VA's Learning Management System (LMS). The tutorial steps through what you need to know to navigate the VSSC portal and obtain access to and use various products/ reports that provide information.

To access the tutorial, sign in to LMS and enter Navigating the VSSC in the catalog search box.

Please note: The LMS system will be out of service beginning Saturday, May 14th and will be replaced by the VA Talent Management System (TMS) on Monday, May 23rd. TMS will contain the same content currently available through LMS.

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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