



Data Issues Brief

About the DIB

The *Data Issues Brief (DIB)* is VIREC's monthly publication that informs VA researchers on current news or updates regarding health data, databases, and medical informatics.

VIREC Updates & Announcements

VIREC Historical Variable Attributes: VHA Medical SAS Datasets

VIREC Historical Variable Attributes: VHA Medical SAS Inpatient Datasets, FY 1999-2011 and *Historical Variable Attributes: VHA Medical SAS Outpatient and Inpatient Encounters Datasets, FY 1999-2011* provide current and historical variable information for Inpatient, Inpatient Encounter, and Outpatient Medical SAS datasets including name, description, length and format, type, and any variations to each variable.

Available on VIREC's website: www.virec.research.va.gov.

Call for Papers: VA QUERI Sponsored Special Issue in Medical Care on HIT, Open until May 1

The VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) program is sponsoring a special supplement issue in *Medical Care* on health information technology (HIT) strategies to support quality improvement (QI) research. The purpose of this supplement is to highlight impacts made in the VA through the use/ implementation of HIT. The call for papers is open until May 1.

Visit the VIREC website for details regarding the call for papers: www.virec.research.va.gov.

Data & Information Systems

BCMA Data available in CDW

The Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) announced the release of a new data domain: Pharmacy, BCMA (Bar Code Medication Administration).

Visit the CDW SharePoint site to view the metadata reports for Pharmacy, BCMA data and other CDW domains.

In this Issue

VIREC Updates & Announcements

- *VIREC Historical Variable Attributes: VHA Medical SAS Datasets*
- *Call for Papers: VA QUERI Sponsored Special Issue in Medical Care on HIT, Open until May 1*

Data & Information Systems

- *BCMA Data available in CDW*
- *Mid-Year Changes to DSS Identifiers*

Education

- *VIREC Cyber Seminars*

Conferences & Calls for Abstracts

- *Call for Abstracts: 2012 SMDM Annual Meeting, Open until May 18*
- *2012 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting*

HSRData-L Listserv

- *Recent Topics*

VIREC Tip of the Month

- *What Are CDW Flags?*

Vista's BCMA application, the source of the BCMA data, has undergone major changes throughout its history which have complex ramifications for the interpretation of the data. Prior to using the new domain, it is recommended that researchers read CDW's best practices for use of the BCMA data.

Visit the CDW SharePoint site to view these tips.

Mid-Year Changes to DSS Identifiers

The Decision Support Office (DSO) released their fiscal year (FY) 2012 mid-year changes to DSS Identifiers, also called "stop codes". Visit the *FY12 DSS Identifier Change List* on the DSS Intranet site for a complete list of changes, which include the activation of new identifiers and changes in definitions and names.

Stop code changes through October 1, 2011, are available on the VIREC website in *DSS Historical Clinic Stop Codes*.

The *VIREC Research User Guide: VHA Decision Support System Clinical National Data Extracts* provides more information on DSS Identifiers.

Education

VIREC Cyber Seminars

Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminars

Date	May 15, 2012	12pm Eastern
Title	<i>Wireless Monitoring of Sleep Apnea</i>	
Presenter	Carl J. Stepnowsky, PhD, San Diego VA Medical Center	
Recently Archived	<i>A Novel Use of Electronic Health Record Data To Inform Patient and Clinician Treatment Choices</i>	

Database and Methods Cyber Seminar Series

Date	May 7, 2012	1pm Eastern
Title	<i>Assessing Race and Ethnicity</i>	
Presenter	Maria Mor, PhD, Pittsburgh VA Medical Center	
Recently Archived	<i>Applying Comorbidity Measures Using VA and Medicare Data</i>	

Register for a seminar or access archived presentations on VIREC's website: www.virec.research.va.gov.

E-mail questions to VIREC's Cyber Seminar Coordinator, Margaret Browning, at Margaret.Browning@va.gov.

Conferences & Calls for Abstracts

Call for Abstracts: 2012 SMDM Annual Meeting, Open until May 18

The Society for Medical Decision Making (SMDM) will hold its Annual Meeting in Phoenix, AZ, October 17–20. The conference theme is “Designing Health Information Technology for Better Health Decisions.” The call for abstracts is open until May 18.

Visit the SMDM website for specific details regarding the event, including the call for abstracts: www.smdm.org/2012meeting/index.shtml.

2012 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting

The 2012 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting (ARM) will be held in Orlando, FL, June 24–26. ARM brings together health services researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to address the critical challenges confronting the nation's health care delivery system.

Visit the AcademyHealth website for details regarding this event: www.academyhealth.org/events/content.cfm?ItemNumber=882&navItemNumber=529.

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. Last month's subject lines included:

- State nursing home
- Looking for CPTCODES, HCPCS, ICD9 codes a complete listing
- Data on socio-economic status

Join the Listserv
Visit VIREC's Intranet site to
subscribe to the listserv

VIREC maintains the HSRData-L Listserv, which is available to researchers and data users with a “va.gov” e-mail address. Archived discussions are available on the HSRData-L Listserv Intranet site.



VIREC Tip of the Month

What Are CDW Flags?

A flag is a data element that provides qualitative information about the value in another cell/data element. In the Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW), CDW data architects use flags to alert users to important information associated with the data. For example, a “Delete” flag indicates that the record was deleted from the source database (generally because it was entered in error). The “TestPatientFlag” identifies data entered while testing computer systems. Researchers using CDW's Vital Sign data should pay attention to the “EnteredInErrorFlag”.

The availability of flags in each domain are found in the domain's metadata report in the “field list column” on the CDW SharePoint site.

This newsletter is provided by the VA Information Resource Center (VIREC).

Subscriptions

To subscribe or unsubscribe from this newsletter, e-mail virec@va.gov.

Suggested Citation

VA Information Resource Center. *VIREC Data Issues Brief* (April 2012). U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Health Services Research and Development Service, VA Information Resource Center.

VA Information Resource Center

Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital

Routing mail code: 151V

5000 South 5th Avenue

Hines, IL 60141-5000

virec@va.gov

www.virec.research.va.gov

VIREC is supported by HSR&D grant SDR 98-004.