



# 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

### Record Level Frequencies: VA/CMS Data

VIReC's VA/CMS Data for Research Project has developed record level frequency counts and percentages for variables in the VA/CMS Medicare, Medicaid, and Patient Assessment datasets.

Available on VIReC's website: [www.virec.research.va.gov](http://www.virec.research.va.gov).

### FY11 Medical SAS® Proc Contents

VIReC's Fiscal Year 2011 (FY11) Medical SAS® Proc Contents contain descriptions of the following Medical SAS® datasets:

- Inpatient
- Inpatient Encounters
- Outpatient

Available on VIReC's website: [www.virec.research.va.gov](http://www.virec.research.va.gov).

## Data and Information Systems

### New Person Class Codes in SAS® Format Libraries

Three new Person Class codes have been added to the VHA Person Class Taxonomy:

- 181807 | Allopathic and Osteopathic Physicians | Obstetrics and Gynecology | Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery
- 182914 | Allopathic and Osteopathic Physicians | Psychiatry and Neurology | Behavioral Neurology and Neuropsychiatry
- 183401 | Allopathic and Osteopathic Physicians | Urology | Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery

The PROV1-PROV10 provider type fields of the Medical SAS Outpatient Event and Inpatient Encounters Datasets contain the Person Class code assigned to the provider(s) for that encounter.

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National Data Systems has updated its SAS® format libraries to reflect the additions, and the VistA New Person File will be updated to reflect the taxonomy changes.

Directive 2012-003 provides additional information on Person Class and the VHA Person Class Taxonomy: [www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub\\_ID=2477](http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=2477).

Visit the NPCD's Intranet site to access the Person Class Taxonomy.

### BIRLS Death File Refreshed

On Jan 24, 2012, National Data Systems created a new Beneficiary Identification and Resource Locator System (BIRLS) Death File SAS® dataset based on a new extract from the VBA BIRLS database. The BIRLS Death File contains information on Veterans known to be deceased. The new SAS file reflects the addition of recent deaths as well as corrections made by VBA to previous data.

Visit VIREC's website for additional information regarding the BIRLS Death File: [www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/BIRLS/BIRLS.htm](http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/BIRLS/BIRLS.htm).

### Mid-FY 2012 DSS NDE Changes

The Decision Support Office (DSO) announced an upcoming change involving up to three new fields in nine of the Decision Support System (DSS) National Data Extracts (NDEs). The purpose of the new fields is to help identify the Active Duty cohort. The fields are 'Patient Type', 'Eligibility Code' and 'Period of Service'. Note: some of these fields already exist in the NDEs, so only the fields still needed in each of the nine NDEs selected for placement will be added. The anticipated effective date of availability for these new fields is the NDE run scheduled for April 27, 2012, containing data through March 2012 (Fiscal Period 6, FY12). The NDEs affected are CHAR4, DISCH, OBS-TRT, OCRED, OUT, OUT2, OUT-IPD, TRT, and TRT-IPD.

NDE Output, SAS/SQL layout specifications are below.

DSS Allscripts NDE Output					SAS (FY12) / SQL Variable Information		
Field Name	Header Text	Source File	Data Type	DSS Length	Variable Name	SAS Length	SQL Data Type
Patient Type	PT	ENCTR	C	2	pt	2	varchar(2)
Eligibility Code	ELIG	ENCTR	C	3	eligibility	3	varchar(3)
Period of Service	POS	ENCTR	C	4	ps	4	varchar(4)

### User Guidance Notification - Identification of Probable Test Patients in CDW

The Data Quality Analysis team within the VHA Office of Informatics and Analytics (OIA) Health Information Governance (HIG) Data Quality Program recently observed cases of likely test patient records in the Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) Production database that do not meet the guidelines specified by VHA Directive 2006-036, *Data Quality Requirements for Identity Management and Master Patient Index Functions*.

The Data Quality Analysis team (DQA) worked with the CDW Architecture Team to develop a solution to identify both labeled and probable unlabeled test patients. DQA's *Identification of Probable Test Patients in CDW- Guidance Document* contains a description of the solution, decision rules, and sample source code for implementation of the decision rules and is available on the CDW Share Point Site.

## CDW Update

In addition to identifying 10 current domains for improvement, the CDW Governance Board prioritized the development of two new domains by June 30, 2012. These new domains are

- Compensation and Pension Record Interchange (CAPRI)
- Administrative Data Repository (ADR)

The CAPRI domain will comprise data from the CAPRI VistA application, which provides VHA Compensation and Pension (C&P) staff with a standardized way of recording C&P examination reports. The ADR hosts enrollment, demographic, and identity management information.

A complete list of CDW FY12 priorities is available on the CDW Share Point site.

## Education

### VIREC Cyber Seminars

#### Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminars

<b>Date</b>	March 20, 2012	12pm Eastern
<b>Title</b>	<i>A Novel Use of Electronic Health Record Data To Inform Patient and Clinician Treatment Choices</i>	
<b>Presenter(s)</b>	John Crilly, PhD, MPH, MSW, Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System	
<b>Recently Archived</b>	<i>Evaluation of Multisite E-learning Training for VA Mental Health Providers within the CAMS Study</i>	

#### Database and Methods Cyber Seminar Series

<b>Date</b>	March 5, 2012	1pm Eastern
<b>Title</b>	<i>Measuring Outpatient Pharmacy Use in the VA Using VA Pharmacy Data</i>	
<b>Presenter(s)</b>	Todd Lee, PharmD, PhD, Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital	
<b>Recently Archived</b>	<i>Measuring Veterans Health Services Use in VA and Medicare (Part 2)</i>	

Register for a seminar or access archived presentations on VIREC's website: [www.virec.research.va.gov](http://www.virec.research.va.gov).

E-mail questions to VIREC's Cyber Seminar Coordinator, Margaret Browning, at [Margaret.Browning@va.gov](mailto:Margaret.Browning@va.gov).

## Conferences

### 2012 HSR&D/QUERI National Conference Approved: New Proposed Dates

The Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) has received approval to hold the combined HSR&D and Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) national conference. New proposed dates for the conference are for the week of July 16 at a location to be determined. The conference theme is "Transforming Veteran Healthcare through Partner-Oriented Research."

Visit HSR&D's website for updated conference information: [www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/meetings/2012/default.cfm](http://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/meetings/2012/default.cfm).

## Calls for Papers & Submissions

### MMRR Special Call for Papers: e-Health Theme Issue, Open until March 2

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is accepting papers on topics relevant to e-Health for publication in the journal of *Medicare & Medicaid Research Review* (MMRR). Topics of special interest for the MMRR theme issue include issues regarding privacy and data security as it pertains to e-Health. When submitting a manuscript, researchers should indicate the submission is in response to the e-Health special theme call for papers.

Details about the call for papers, additional topics of special interest, and submission guidelines are available in the “2012 Theme: e-Health – Special Call for Papers” announcement on the CMS website: [www.cms.gov/MMRR/downloads/MMRR\\_2012\\_eHealth\\_Call\\_for\\_Papers\\_Final.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/MMRR/downloads/MMRR_2012_eHealth_Call_for_Papers_Final.pdf).

### Request for Information: Input on Data and Informatics Issues, Open until March 12

The Data and Informatics Working Group (DIWG) of the Advisory Committee to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director is seeking input from internal and external data and informatics experts and the general public regarding: data and its challenges, standards development, future use, accessibility, incentives for sharing, and support needs. The Advisory Committee DIWG was formed to provide the Director with expert advice and recommendations on issues that arise in the management, integration, and analysis of large biomedical datasets. Responses to this request for information (RFI) will be accepted through March 12.

Visit the NIH website for details about this RFI: [grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-12-032.html](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-12-032.html).

### Call for Proposals: 2012 AMIA Annual Symposium, Open until March 15

The American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) will hold its Annual Symposium this year in Chicago, IL, from November 3–7. The call for proposals is open until March 15.

Visit the AMIA website for details regarding this event: [www.amia.org/amia2012](http://www.amia.org/amia2012).

## 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. January’s subject lines included:

- Height and Weight data
- hospital and clinic data
- Medical SAS Datasets Inpatient overlap

**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



### New to VA Research? Learn About National Sources for VHA Electronic Data

In addition to Research User Guides to pharmacy, Decision Support System (DSS), and VHA Medical SAS® (MedSAS) Datasets, VIREC posts tabulations of variable values on its website. Frequency distribution tables are available for select DSS, Medical SAS, and VA/CMS datasets. VIREC's frequency tables contain either record level or patient-level counts.

Available on VIREC's website: [www.virec.research.va.gov](http://www.virec.research.va.gov).

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