



# 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

### New VIREC Website

VIREC is pleased to announce the launch of our new Internet website: [www.virec.research.va.gov](http://www.virec.research.va.gov). Features of the new site include:

- VIREC's Data Access & Request Guide
- Website dedicated to VIREC's VA/CMS Data for Research project
- "Data Transition to the Corporate Data Warehouse" Web page informing VA researchers of data transitions to the CDW

Remember to update all your VIREC bookmarks.

### CDW Proc Contents

SAS Proc Contents for the Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) provide a descriptive overview of the contents of select CDW domains.

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

### VIREC Exhibit Booth at HSR&D/QUERI National Conference

VIREC is pleased to be attending the 2012 Health Service Research and Development Service/ Quality Enhancement Research Initiative National Conference. VIREC staff will be available at the VIREC exhibit booth throughout the meeting to answer researchers' questions about VA databases and information systems. Stop by the exhibit booth to learn about VIREC and the range of services and products VIREC develops and disseminates for VA researchers. Pick up our July special edition *Data Issues Brief* that details all of VIREC's activities during the conference.

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## Data and Information Systems

### Withdrawal of DSS NDEs from AITC Mainframe

Researchers who currently have access to DSS National Data Extract (NDE) data on the Austin Information Technology Center (AITC) mainframe and who will continue to need access to DSS NDE data after September 30, 2012, should visit VIREC's "DSS NDE Transition Process" page for important information regarding NDS' transition process.

Available on VIREC's website: [www.virec.research.va.gov](http://www.virec.research.va.gov). (Direct link to "DSS NDE Transition Process" page: [www.virec.research.va.gov/Data-Transition/NDE-Process.htm](http://www.virec.research.va.gov/Data-Transition/NDE-Process.htm).)

### New VA/CMS Data Available

The VA/CMS Data for Research Project is pleased to announce that calendar year 2010 Medicare data, 2010 Assessment data, and 2007-2008 Medicaid data are now available. These data are available by request for VA researchers with approved projects. VIREC has contacted researchers previously approved for these data to arrange transfer of the data to the research project.

Available on VA/CMS' new website: [www.virec.research.va.gov/Index-VACMS.htm](http://www.virec.research.va.gov/Index-VACMS.htm).

### Facilities Get New Station Number

VistA conversions reflecting the realignment of two Massachusetts CBOC facilities under the VA Central Western Massachusetts Health Care System station number 631 were recently completed. Effective April 1, 2012, CDW should have encounters for substation 631GF (Fitchburg) and no encounters for substation 518GG. Effective April 29, 2012, CDW should have encounters for substation 631GE (Worcester) and no encounters for substation 523GB.

Medical SAS Dataset data have included the new substation numbers since October 1, 2011.

Visit VIREC's October 2011 *Data Issues Brief* for details on the original announcement.

### Creation of Monthly BIRLS Death File Resumes

The monthly updates to the BIRLS Death file have resumed. The BIRLS file now contains a complete monthly overlay file from VBA to ensure all changes are reflected in the data held by VHA. The current file has a creation date of June 19, 2012. The file will be created on the first Saturday of each month.

VIREC's May 2012 *Data Issues Brief* contains the original announcement on the suspension of the monthly updates to the file.

## Education

### VIREC Cyber Seminars

#### Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminars

<b>Date</b>	August, 21, 2012	12pm Eastern
<b>Topic</b>	<i>Qualitative Evaluation of VA Personnel Interactions with the VA's EHR</i>	
<b>Presenter</b>	Laura M. Bonner, PhD, Seattle, VA Puget Sound HSR&D Center of Excellence	

#### Database and Methods Cyber Seminar Series

<b>Date</b>	August, 6, 2012	1pm Eastern
<b>Title</b>	<i>Improving Mortality Ascertainment Using the VHA Vital Status File</i>	
<b>Presenter</b>	Elizabeth Tarlov, PhD, RN, Hines, Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital	

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).

### Electronic Data Methods Forum Special Supplement Published

The Medical Care Section of the American Public Health Association recently published a special journal supplement in *Medical Care* titled "Electronic Data Methods (EDM) Forum: Building the Infrastructure to Conduct Comparative Effectiveness Research and Patient-Centered Outcomes Research using Electronic Clinical Data." The supplement includes 14 papers on strategies to building the infrastructure for Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER), Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR), and Quality Improvement (QI) using electronic clinical data.

The articles are available for free on Medical Care's website: <http://journals.lww.com/lww-medicalcare/toc/2012/07001>.

## Conferences & Calls for Abstracts

### 2012 Healthcare Data Warehousing Association Annual Conference, Call for Abstracts, July 13

The Healthcare Data Warehousing Association (HDWA) annual conference will be held October 2-4, in Ottawa, Canada. The conference theme is: *Creating an impact on healthcare – Using data to make a difference.*

Visit HDWA's website and register as a member for more information about HDWA and the annual conference, including the call for abstracts: <http://hdwa.org/hdwa/home/>.

## 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:

- Teaching hospitals
- Facility crosswalk
- Austin Medical SAS data question

**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

#### Where Can I Obtain Veteran Population Statistics?

Researchers needing summary Veteran population statistics can go to the National Center for Veteran's Analysis and Statistics (NCVAS) website. Information on the NCVAS website includes:

- Veteran demographics, such as the total number of Veterans receiving health care services
- Number of male and female Veterans
- Total number of enrollees
- Veteran geographic location
- Utilization of other VA benefits
- VA Expenditures

Additional information is available on the NCVAS website: [www.va.gov/vetdata/index.asp](http://www.va.gov/vetdata/index.asp).

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

### Subscriptions

To subscribe or unsubscribe from this newsletter, e-mail [virec@va.gov](mailto:virec@va.gov).

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