



# 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

### Data Quality References Workbook

VIReC's *Data Quality References Workbook* lists and groups select peer reviewed articles related to data quality by topic and data quality dimension. The workbook includes publications from 1991-2012, full citations, and abstracts.

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

### Resource on Veterans' Enrollment in Medicare Part D

VIReC's VA/CMS Data for Research website now provides information about Veterans' enrollment in Part D, including summary statistics comparing enrollment of the VA/CMS Cohort to a 5% random sample of all Medicare beneficiaries.

Available on the "Veterans' Enrollment in Medicare Part D" Web page: [www.virec.research.va.gov/VACMS/Medicare/Veterans-Enrollment-D.htm](http://www.virec.research.va.gov/VACMS/Medicare/Veterans-Enrollment-D.htm).

### SAS Proc Contents: Medical SAS Datasets & DSS Clinical NDEs

SAS Proc Contents provide descriptions of SAS datasets including variable type, length, format, and labels. New SAS Proc Contents include:

- FY2012 – Medical SAS datasets
- FY2013 – Medical SAS mid-year datasets
- FY2012 – DSS Laboratory (LAB), Laboratory Results (LAR), Pharmacy (PHA), and Radiology (RAD) clinical National Data Extract (NDE) datasets

Available on VIReC's website: [www.virec.research.va.gov/Intro/Documentation-Index.htm](http://www.virec.research.va.gov/Intro/Documentation-Index.htm).

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### **Select Variable Frequencies: Medical SAS Datasets**

*VIREC Select Variable Frequencies* contain record level tabulations for select dataset variables. Tabulations are now available for fiscal year 2012 (FY12) Medical SAS Inpatient "Acute Care Main" (PM), Outpatient "Visit" (SF), Outpatient "Event" (SE), and "Inpatient Encounters" (IE) datasets.

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

## **Data & Information Systems**

### **Subject Matter Experts Needed for CDW Domain Action Teams**

The VHA Data Quality Program is inviting researchers to join Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) Domain Action Teams. The teams provide input on CDW domains including which data elements are included, data formats, and other details. Currently, volunteers are particularly needed for the Lab (Microbiology) and Appointments Domain Action Teams.

Researchers interested in joining should contact Mark Love ([Mark.Love@va.gov](mailto:Mark.Love@va.gov)), Data Stewardship Program Manager for the Data Quality Program.

### **VAST Reporting Now Provided by VSSC**

VHA Site Tracking (VAST) reports are now available on the VHA Support Service Center (VSSC) site. The VAST database contains information on all VHA unique sites of care such as station name and station number; address, phone and fax numbers; primary VA service type and other affiliated VA services.

Reports are available on the VSSC Intranet site.

### **Rural Health Profile Reporting Tool Available from VSSC**

Researchers working in the field of VA rural health care will be interested in the new Rural Health Profile reporting tool available from the VHA Support Service Center (VSSC). This reporting functionality brings together data from a number of the VSSC data cubes to enable a quick breakdown of VA rurality by a variety of metrics and in a variety of formats.

Available on the VSSC Intranet site.

## Education

### VIREC Cyber Seminars

#### Clinical Informatics Cyber Seminars

<b>Date</b>	February 19, 2013	12pm Eastern
<b>Title</b>	<i>Promoting Patient-Centered Care by Home Automated Telemanagement in Multiple Sclerosis</i>	
<b>Presenters</b>	Mitchell T. Wallin, MD, MPH, Washington DC VAMC; Joseph Finkelstein, MD, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine	

#### Database and Methods Cyber Seminar Series

<b>Date</b>	February 4, 2013	1pm Eastern
<b>Title</b>	<i>Research Access to VA Data</i>	
<b>Presenter</b>	Linda Kok, MA, Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital	

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

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

### CDW Training of the Month

The Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) offers a monthly training session to discuss different aspects of using CDW data for research. These sessions are conducted using LiveMeeting and are held on the last Wednesday of the month from 2:00 – 3:00 pm CST.

The FY2013 schedule is available from the Training section of the CDW SharePoint site.

## Calls for Abstracts

### AcademyHealth Interest Groups Calls for Abstracts Due February 13

Several AcademyHealth Interest Groups are accepting abstracts for potential presentation during their 2013 annual meetings. The submission deadline is February 13, 2013.

Visit AcademyHealth's website for a list of interest groups calling for abstracts, topics, and submission guidelines: [www.academyhealth.org/Communities/Communities.cfm?ItemNumber=3934&navItemNumber=551](http://www.academyhealth.org/Communities/Communities.cfm?ItemNumber=3934&navItemNumber=551).

### AJMC Call for Papers on HIT

The *American Journal of Managed Care* (AJMC) is publishing its third annual health information technology (HIT) special issue. Papers must be submitted before May 3, 2013, for optimal consideration.

Visit the Info for Authors section of the AJMC website for more information: [www.ajmc.com](http://www.ajmc.com).

## 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:

- CDW Inpatient
- SE Data Clstop=160/161
- Prorate DSS Cost Data?

**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 the main differences between CDW, RDWs, and VDWs?

##### *Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW)*

CDW holds selected data elements from all VHA VistA systems (national data) and from several other VHA clinical and administrative systems, including Decision Support System (DSS) data. CDW is organized into domains (or themes). It does not provide analytic business software, such as ProClarity or PowerPivot.

##### *Regional Data Warehouses (RDWs)*

RDWs include data from VistA systems at facilities within each of the four Office of Information & Technology regions. Analytic business software available at RDWs varies. RDWs hold some data that are not available in the CDW, but the elements vary for each RDW.

##### *Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Data Warehouses (VDWs)*

VDWs extract data from VistA systems at facilities within their VISN and often from other data systems as well. VDWs may provide custom analytic business software. VDWs were all locally designed to support the needs of VISN management so they vary in structure and content and have a limited capacity to support research. VDWs hold some data that are not available in the CDW, but the elements vary for each VDW.

More information about the CDW is available from:

- VIREC's website: [www.virec.research.va.gov/CDW/Overview.htm](http://www.virec.research.va.gov/CDW/Overview.htm)
- CDW's SharePoint site

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**Suggested Citation**

VA Information Resource Center. VIREC *Data Issues Brief* (January 2013). U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Health Services Research and Development Service, VA Information Resource Center.

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