



1. 2003 Medicare Data and 100% Denominator File Now Available for Researchers

VIREC has the 2003 VA Medicare Data and the 1999-2003 100% Denominator Files available for distribution to researchers. Questions and requests can be addressed via email to virec_medicare@va.gov. Procedures to request the data are available on the VIREC Web site, <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/VA-MedicareData/DataRequest/Procedure.htm>.

2. HDR 2005 Deployment

Another big step toward realization of the Health Data Repository (HDR) occurred April 19, 2005, when alpha testing began on VistA Vitals package data. Allergies and Outpatient Pharmacy data will be alpha tested when Vitals testing is complete. Laboratory data will follow. HDR IMS (Interim Messaging Solution) and HDR Historical are both scheduled to be deployed by July 31, 2005, with the first four domains, Vitals, Allergies, Outpatient Pharmacy and Laboratory data. HDR Historical will include data (non-standard and standard) from deployment day back through 1999. HDR-IMS, the first version of the HDR, will contain standardized data from deployment day forward. Preparation has already begun for standardization of the next domains to be included in the HDR: Problem List, Text Integration Utility (TIU), Orders, Encounters, Radiology, and Immunizations. For further information, see the HDR Web site on the Intranet at [REDACTED].

3. ProClarity New Tool for Researchers

ProClarity, a software application for analysis of relational database information, is a new tool available to VA researchers through an enterprise-wide license. The HSR&D Service Web site presents a description of ProClarity use with the VHA Financial and Clinical Data Mart (FCDM) at (http://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/for_researchers/resources/tools.cfm). The April 25, 2005, Special Edition of the *Financial and Clinical Data Mart Newsletter* provides information on ProClarity products and training opportunities now available as a result of the enterprise-wide license. The newsletter can be found on the VA Intranet via the VISN Support Services Center (VSSC) Web site. (Contact the VIREC Help Desk, virec@va.gov, for assistance in connecting to the VSSC site).

4. ResDAC Workshops in May

Research users of VA Medicare data might want to attend one or more of the workshops being offered by the Research Data Assistant Center (ResDAC) at the University of Minnesota this month:

- CMS 101: Introduction to the use of Medicare data for research
[May 16-18, 2005](#) (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.) - **Full - register for waiting list only**
- CMS 301: Using SEER/Medicare Data for Research - **New 1 day workshop**
[May 19, 2005](#)
- CMS 302: Conducting Economic Research using Medicare Data - **New 1 day workshop**
[May 19, 2005](#)

5. Top-level Discussion of HealthVet VistA

Researchers using VA data and information systems will see the information technology environment change as the VHA continues its progress toward what is called HealthVet systems. (See http://www1.va.gov/vha_oi/index.cfmhttp://www1.va.gov/vha_oi/page.cfm?pg=21 for an explanation of HealthVet.) The VA Knowledge Network (VAKN) will re-broadcast the April 28, 2005, one-hour discussion by Under Secretary of Health, Dr. Jonathan Perlin, and Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology, Mr. Robert McFarland of the purpose for moving from VistA to HealthVet VistA and the VA's support for this effort. For dates and times of the re-broadcasts, see the VAKN Intranet calendar at .

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO DISSEMINATE TO COLLEAGUES! *Data Issues Briefs* are developed by the staff of 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. *Data Issues Briefs* are produced monthly. All issues are available on the VIREC Web site at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov>. If you wish to receive email notification of future issues or have any suggestions or comment about the *Data Issues Briefs*, please send an e-mail message to the VIREC at virec@va.gov or call (708) 202-2413.