



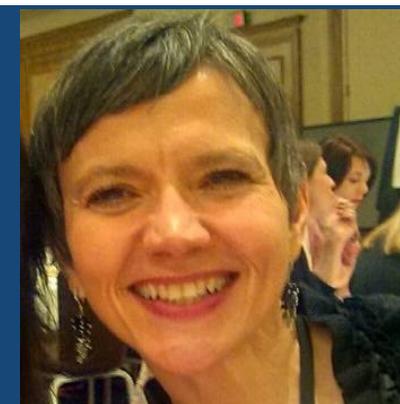
VIReC Database & Methods Cyberseminar Series

FY 21 Session 1

Overview of VA Data, Information Systems, National Databases and Research Uses

Maria Souden, MSI, PhD

Acting Director, VA Information Resource Center



Where can I download a copy of the slides?

VA HSR&D

CYBERSEMINARS



SAMPLE EMAIL

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VIReC Database & Methods Cyberseminar Series

Informational seminars to help the research community access and use VA databases.

- VA data sources & data access systems/tools
- Specific data/research topics
- Application of VA data to research and quality improvement questions
- Limitations of secondary data use
- Resources to support VA data use

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- Support
- ▶ Research in the VA

Search VIReC's Site



VIReC » Cyberseminars » Database & Methods Series

Database & Methods Cyberseminar Series

Navigating the VA Data Landscape

VIReC's Database & Methods Series is an introductory guide to VA data and information systems. Sessions are designed to help VA researchers understand common VA data sources and how they are used in research and quality improvement. This series is suitable for all levels.



- Current Schedule
- Archive

Current Schedule

Database & Methods Cyberseminars are held the first Monday of the month at 1:00 PM Eastern, with the exception of federal holidays. The series begins with an introduction to VA data, an overview of resources for using these data, and information about data access and request processes. Presenters discuss a variety of data topics and sources, describing how VA data can be applied to research and quality improvement questions. This series is updated yearly to address changes in the data environment.

Select a title below to register for an upcoming cyberseminar or to access an archived session.

Date	Title	Presenter(s)
10/7/2019	Overview of VA Data, Information Systems, National Databases and Research Uses Introduces the series; common VA data sources and their uses; platforms and tools for using VA data; and where to find additional resources.	Souden, M
11/4/2019	Requesting Approval for Access to VA Data Explains how VHA data access procedures differ based on purpose of work and demonstrates resources for identifying data request requirements and submitting a data request.	Kok, L
2/3/2020	Measuring Veterans' Medicare Healthcare Use Provides an overview of Medicare data available to VA researchers and describe how these	deGroot, K

Access upcoming schedule, registration links, and archived sessions from the VIReC Education page

<https://bit.ly/39B1JUo>



FY21 Upcoming Sessions

First Monday of the month | 1:00pm-2:00pm ET

Date	Topic
11/2/20	Requesting Approval for Access to VA Data
12/7/20	Meet VIReC: The Researcher's Guide to VA Data
1/4/21	Measuring Veterans' Medicare Healthcare Use

Additional topics TBA, including...

- VA Pharmacy Data
- Mortality Ascertainment & Cause of Death
- VA Medicare Data (VA/CMS)
- Race & Ethnicity Data
- Using Joint Legacy Viewer for Research
- Healthcare Utilization Data
- VA REDCap
- Focused Sessions on Uses of CDW Data

[Stay tuned for schedule updates!](#)



VIReC Database & Methods Cyberseminar Series

FY 21 Session 1

Overview of VA Data, Information Systems, National Databases and Research Uses

Maria Souden, MSI, PhD

Acting Director, VA Information Resource Center



The purpose of this cyberseminar is to introduce VA data and resources for using it effectively.

Poll #1: What is your **role** in research and/or quality improvement projects?

- Investigator, PI, Co-I
- Statistician, data manager, analyst, or programmer
- Project coordinator
- Other – please describe via the chat function



Poll #2: How many *years of experience* working with VA data?

- None – I'm brand new to this!
- One year or less
- More than 1, less than 3 years
- At least 3, less than 7 years
- At least 7, less than 10 years
- 10 years or more

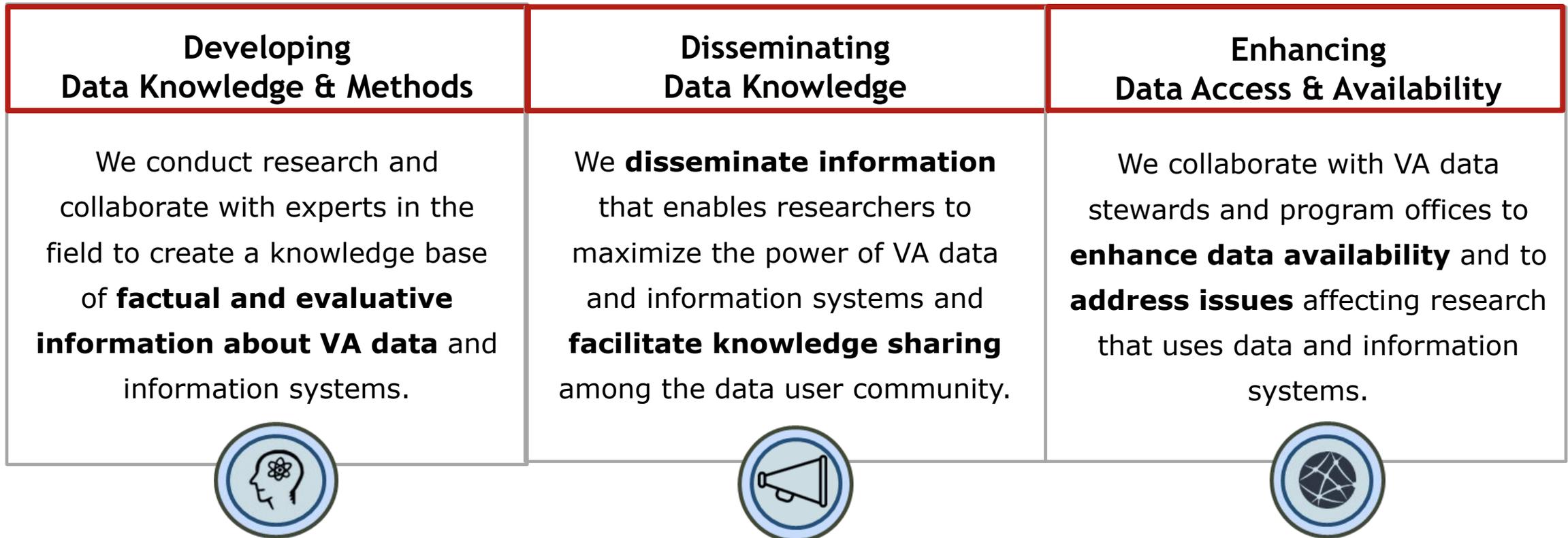


By the session's end, you should be able to...

1. Convey a basic understanding of **VIReC's mission** and how we support the use of VA data.
2. Identify key **VA data sources** used in Research and Quality Improvement projects.
3. Describe the primary **differences in the origin and use** of various data.
4. Begin to conceptualize how VA data can be **applied to specific research questions** or areas of study.
5. Know where to go for **additional data resources and support**.



Our mission is to advance VA capacity to use data effectively for research and quality improvement and to foster communication between research data users and the VA healthcare community.



Session roadmap

- Key concepts for the VA data environment
- Commonly used VA data sources
- EHR Modernization and its impact on data
- Considerations for using VA data
- Data access and tools
- Resources for more information and support

20 miles

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Key Concepts

Understanding the VA data
environment

Activities that generate VA data



Clinical care (electronic health record)



Veteran surveys, use of patient portal



Healthcare operations



Patient care outside the VA system

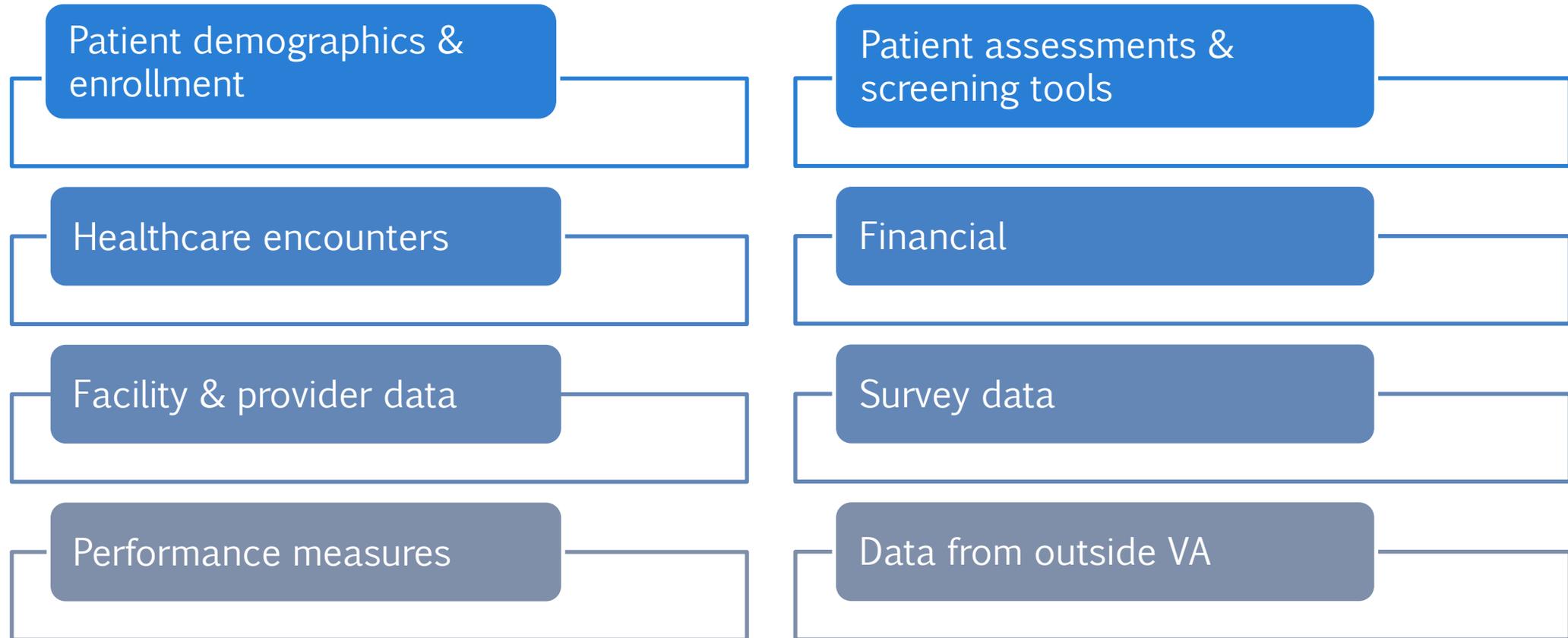


Financial recordkeeping



Program administration

Types of Data

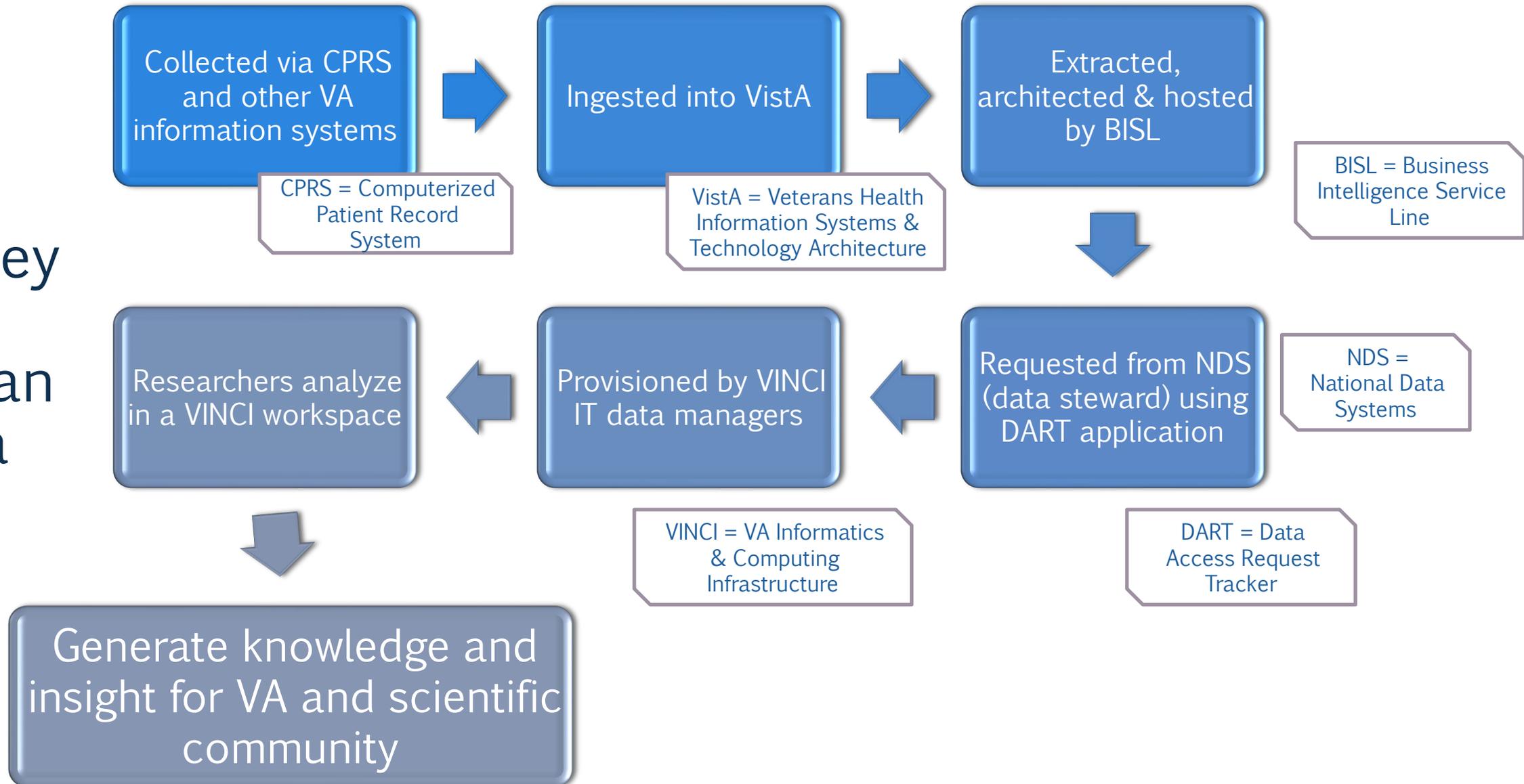


Veterans Health Information Systems & Technology Architecture (VistA)

- Integrated system of software applications
- Directly supports patient care at Veterans Health Administration (VHA) healthcare facilities
- Source of data for many VHA datasets or databases
- Electronic Health Record Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) is the front-end for most clinical data collection



Journey of Veteran Data



BISL Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) Environment

- Set of servers maintained by VA Business Intelligence Service Line (BISL)
- Platform for most of VHA's national data assets
- Includes CDW datasets (production and raw domains)
- Also hosts other datasets, often derived from VistA but including additional elements generated by VA administrative and program offices
 - e.g., Managerial Cost Accounting Office (MCAO), Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health (ADUSH)

[CDW Intro and Policies](#) (from BISL SharePoint) Learn more

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20 miles

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Data Sources 1: Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW)

Poll #3: How much do you know about the CDW?

- Very familiar- I use it all the time!
- Somewhat familiar- I've heard of it, and use it sometimes
- Not too familiar- I've heard of it, but don't use it
- Not at all familiar- this is my first-time hearing about it

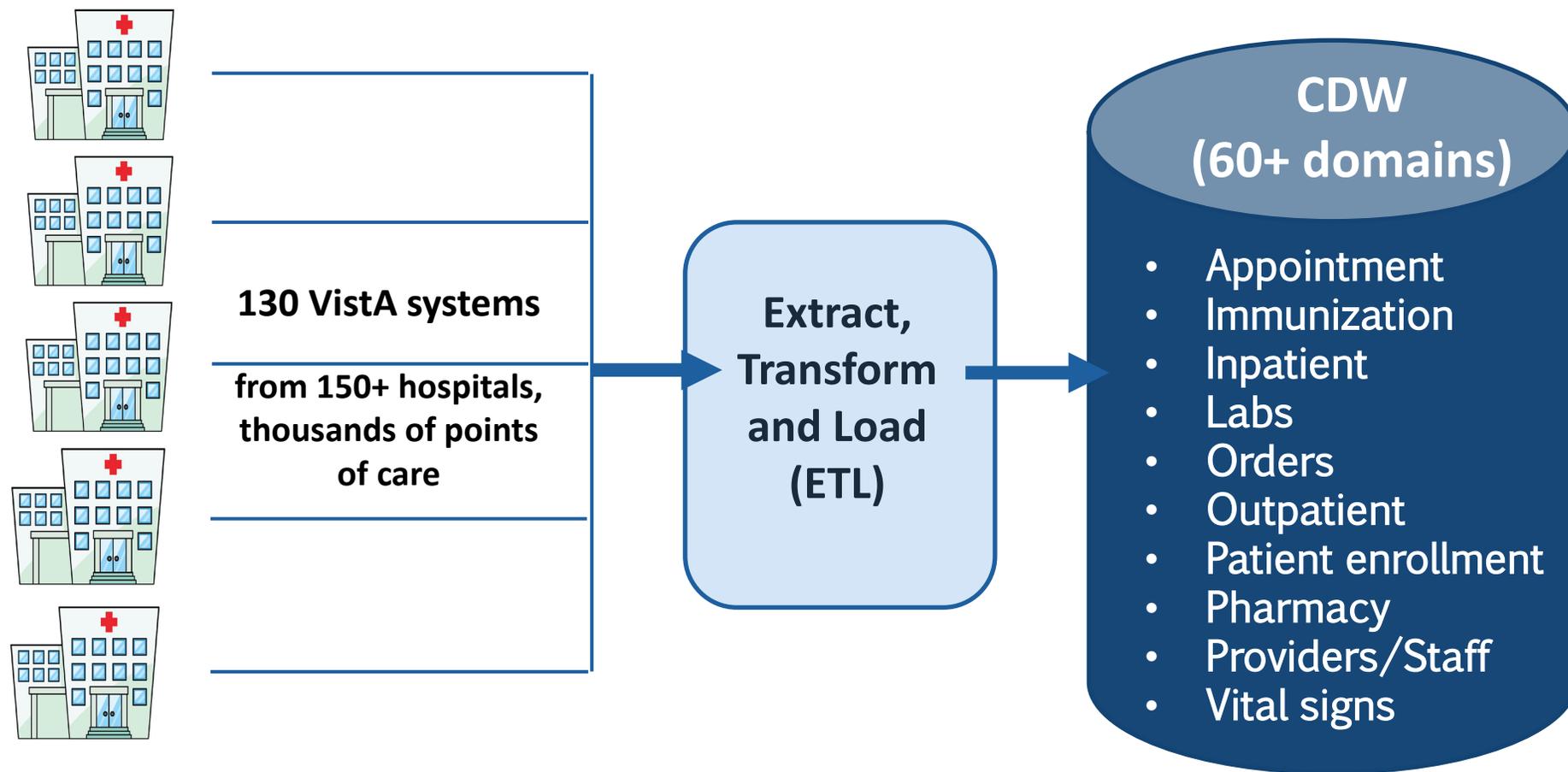


CDW - Contents

- Patient Electronic Health Record (EHR) and other clinical and administrative record ingested into VistA system as component elements
- Patients, demographics, procedures, diagnoses, lab results, allergies, immunizations, health history, problem list, providers seen, medications, history of care, etc.
- Data across 20 years for 24+ million patients
- Extracted, transformed and loaded (ETL) by BISL into a SQL database

CDW - Architecture

- Data are updated nightly
 - ❖ Architecture and transformation logic subject to change
- Close to 1,000 tables and 20,000 columns
 - ❖ Linking keys between tables used to create analytic dataset for a cohort
- Tables are grouped together by topic, called “domains”
 - ❖ Production domains contain tables that have been structured by BSL to support re-joining of tables.
 - ❖ Raw domains are pre-production, containing tables that are direct extracts from the source system (e.g., VistA)



More about domains: <https://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/CDW/Domain-Descriptions/CDW-Domain-Descriptions.pdf>

New to CDW? Start here.

<http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/CDW/Documentation.htm>

[-] Getting Started with CDW

These cyberseminars are designed to help new CDW users with understanding the nature of relational data, becoming familiar with CDW structure and logic, finding documentation of CDW content, and knowing what to expect when first viewing CDW data in SQL Server Management Studio (SSMS) software.

Resources	Released	 Resource
CDW: A Conceptual Overview	Mar 2017	
CDW: Locating Its Documentation	Apr 2017	
Getting the Information You Need From CDW: SQL Starter Language	Jan 2015	
NEW! Querying CDW Metadata Views	May 2018	
Building Your Dataset in CDW: Joining Tables within a Domain	Jul 2015	
Getting CDW Back Together: Joining CDW Tables (Continued)	Oct 2016	
Data Management in SQL: Selected Intermediate SQL Skills	Oct 2016	

Email virec@va.gov to be notified of new CDW products and seminars.

Poll #4: Which of the following data play a role in your research area or topics?

- Inpatient procedures
- Outpatient medications
- Cost of care
- Facility characteristics
- Patient income
- Diagnosis codes
- Care outside VA
- Lab results
- Pathology reports
- Surgical outcomes
- Comorbid conditions
- Other (specify using chat function)



Data Sources 2: Derived and Value-Added Data

Value Added Data (VistA Data +)

- Many additional datasets are centrally available from CDW servers
- Typically comprised of a VistA extract that has been augmented with additional administrative or program office data to serve VA reporting or tracking needs.
- Often made available for research and QI use as **value-added** sources

Quick Reference Care Data with Value Added

MedSAS

- ✓ Summary of VistA inpatient and outpatient data
- ✓ Reorganized by discharge/visit/encounter

Vital Status Files

- ✓ VistA inpatient + external sources of death data
- ✓ Algorithm applied to determine best date of death

Managerial Cost Accounting Office (MCAO) National Data Extracts

- ✓ VistA data for labs, pharmacy, radiology + 24 other clinical, financial, administrative and functions
- ✓ Incorporates cost information

Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM) Database

- ✓ VistA medication data across settings
- ✓ Incorporates prescription and dispensing details

Quick Reference Administrative Data with Value Added

Assistant Deputy
Undersecretary for Health
(ADUSH) Enrollment Files

✓ Monthly and annual static data about VHA enrollment, eligibility for enrollment, patient zip code

Planning Systems Support
Group (PSSG) Geocoded
Enrollee Files

✓ Static data containing enrollee address, latitude and longitude, rurality indicator, market, and submarket – drive time and distance to VA facilities

Health Economics Resource
Center (HERC) Cost Data

✓ Estimate of the expected cost of every VA health service provided, inpatient & outpatient

VA Surgical Quality
Improvement Program
(VASQIP) Data

✓ Information about surgical procedures and outcomes

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Department of Veterans Affairs
VHA Data Portal

Data Sources Data Access Tools & Applications Resources Training Policy & Admin Support

Data Sources > Data Sources Overview

Quick View

The VHA Data Portal defines a data source as where the data comes from or a place to access data for a project or study.

Data Sources Overview

Overview

In VHA, the term data sources is often used to describe specific bodies of data such as, inpatient data, electronic health record data, mainframe SAS data sets, and the Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW).

The VHA Data Portal defines a data source as where the data comes from or a place to access data for a project or study. These data sources include data reports, data sets, data files, databases, data warehouses, and data repositories.

Data Sources

Select a data source from the list below to view a brief description and link to more information about each source. Expand the Data Source option in the quick links for a quick view of all data sources and links to their pages.

[+ Expand All](#)

- [Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health \(ADUSH\) Enrollment Files](#)

The ADUSH for Policy and Planning Enrollment files contain enrollment, eligibility, demographic, cost, and location information for VHA enrollees and non-enrollees who have received VA care. [Learn more...](#)

- [Austin Information Technology Center \(AITC\) Mainframe](#)
- [Beneficiary Identification & Records Locator System \(BIRLS\) Death File](#)
- [Bereaved Family Survey \(BFS\) Database](#)
- [Care Assessment Need \(CAN\) Scores](#)
- [Corporate Data Warehouse \(CDW\)](#)

CDW is an evolving repository of national VHA data. It is a physical implementation of a logical data model at the enterprise level for VHA. [Learn more...](#)

- [Health Economics Resource Center \(HERC\) Cost Data](#)
- [Homeless Registry](#)

Full list of centrally available VA data

VHA Data Portal Index of Data Sources

<http://vaww.vhadatportal.med.va.gov/DataSources/DataSourcesOverview.aspx>
(VA Intranet)



Data Sources 3: Data About Outside Care

Veteran Care in the Community

- Provided to VA under Data Use Agreement (DUA) or contractual arrangement
- Contributes to a more complete picture of Veteran healthcare utilization
- Made available for research and QI use through NDS/CDW and other data stewards

Quick Reference VA Data Sources for Outside Care

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS)

- ✓VIReC managed and provisioned data for Medicaid and Medicare claims
- ✓Includes other data such as US Renal Data System, Medicare Current Beneficiary survey, long-term care patient assessment data

Community Care Data

- ✓Claims data for non-VA care paid for by VA through contracts, Veterans Choice VACAA, and MISSION Act
- ✓Found in several CDW domains

DoD-VA Infrastructure for Clinical Intelligence (DAVINCI)

- ✓Clinical, administrative, and demographic data from DoD's Military Health System Data Repository (MDR)
- ✓VINCI-transformed to OMOP common data model to map VA CDW and DoD MDR data into standard terminology

Poll #5: Which VA data sources will you try and learn more about in the future?

- ADUSH Enrollment File
- Pharmacy Benefits Management
- VASQIP Surgery Data
- VA/CMS (Medicaid & Medicare)
- DAVINCI (DoD)
- MedSAS Inpatient
- MedSAS Outpatient
- Vital Status File
- CDW
- HERC or MCAO cost data
- PSSG Geographic Data
- Other (specify using chat function)



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20 miles

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VA Data – Future State

EHR Modernization and Its Impact on Data

Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM)

- VA has begun a decade-long transition to a new, commercially developed EHR – Cerner Millennium.
- Cerner's Computerized Scheduling System is already implemented in Columbus as a stand-alone adjunct to VistA/CPRS.
- By the end of October Mann-Grandstaff (Spokane) will be the first VAMC to implement the full Millennium EHR.
- Rollout continues next in VISNs 10 and 20.



ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD
MODERNIZATION

Preparing Research for the EHRM

- The Office of EHRM (OEHRM) Research Workgroup (co-chairs Maria Souden & Jim Breeling) is advocating for research needs and functional requirements from the Cerner system
- The RWG, VIREC, and other resource centers will be supporting researchers through the transition.
- Newly created ORD Strategic Initiative for EHR Synergy (OSIRES) provides ORD-side support for change management and communication.



EHRM Implications for Data

- As sites transition, their EHR data no longer flows into VistA; and national datasets become incomplete.
- Millennium data generated by a different interface, architected in a different model than VistA/CDW, with its own logic
- Learning curve for new data structures, formats, and content
- New data architecture for bringing Millennium data into VA analytic environment (data syndication) – CDW Work2 and CDW Work3 become new data source.
- Development of data knowledge and guidance for use of Cerner-generated data alongside of VistA-generated data.

EHRM Education for Researchers



Research & EHR Synergy Cyberseminar Series

4th Wednesdays at 12 noon Eastern

ORD collaboration to cover all aspects of Research's response to and engagement in EHRM.

Kickoff October 28th

[EHRM and Implications for Research](#)

Maria Souden and Jim Breeling,
ORD Chief of Biomedical
Informatics

OEHRM Syndicated Data Bits Weekly Webinar

Every Friday, 12-1 Eastern time.

Presentations on data migration, syndication, mapping, and models by the technical teams doing the work.

Schedule notifications and join information at [BISL CDW training announcements page](#).

Series presentation and recording [archive](#)

EHRM Knowledge Resources for Researchers

- OSIRES EHRM & Research SharePoint site - general EHRM information and research transition activities
<https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VHAPugResearch/RRG/Pages/EHRM-Research.aspx>
- VIREC “EHRM and Implications for Data Users” page - data-specific information and resource links
<https://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/EHRM/Overview-and-Implications.htm>
- OEHRM “Data Management and Migration Knowledgebase” SharePoint site - documentation for data transformations and mapping
<https://vaww.cdw.va.gov/sites/EHRMDataIntegration/DIRAKnowledgeShare/Pages/DIRAKnowledgeShareHome.aspx>
- VA OEHRM Intranet site - high level information, about EHRM program office and activities <https://vaww.ehrm.va.gov/>

Poll #6: What are your biggest concerns regarding the impact of the EHRM on your research?

- Delays in receiving data
- Won't be able to access Cerner data
- Data less complete
- Data elements I need will not be available
- Long-term maintenance of and access to CDW
- Limitations on access to data and system.
- Not knowing how to use the EHR for research activity
- Opportunities for informatics deployment in the EHR
- Impact on ability to get funded
- Other (specify in chat)



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20 miles

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Strengths & benefits

- Size/Volume - largest integrated healthcare system in US, with 20 years of data of longitudinal data on 24 million patients
- Breadth/Scope of data – includes clinical data, assessment tools, administrative etc.
- Timely – some data available in almost real time
- Can be linked to external data (i.e., CMS, NDI, DoD)
- Data created for VHA operations can also be used for research

Challenges & limitations

- Data landscape can be complicated – multiple sources for similar data elements; likely to get more complicated with EHRM
- Results may not be generalizable to general population
 - Mostly male, lower SES, sicker than average, Veteran-prevalent conditions (PTSD, mental health, traumatic brain injury, limb loss)
- Not all Veterans enrolled in VHA
- Many Veterans also receive care outside VHA
- Some data elements are less reliably available, e.g., income, education

VIReC Resources for Topical & Methodological Guidance

VIReC Intranet “Data Topics” Pages

- <https://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/Intro/Working-with-VA-Data.htm>

Database & Methods Cyberseminars

- <https://www.virec.research.va.gov/Cyberseminars/Database-Methods.asp>

Researcher’s Notebook Series (VA Intranet)

- <https://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/Notebook/Overview.htm>

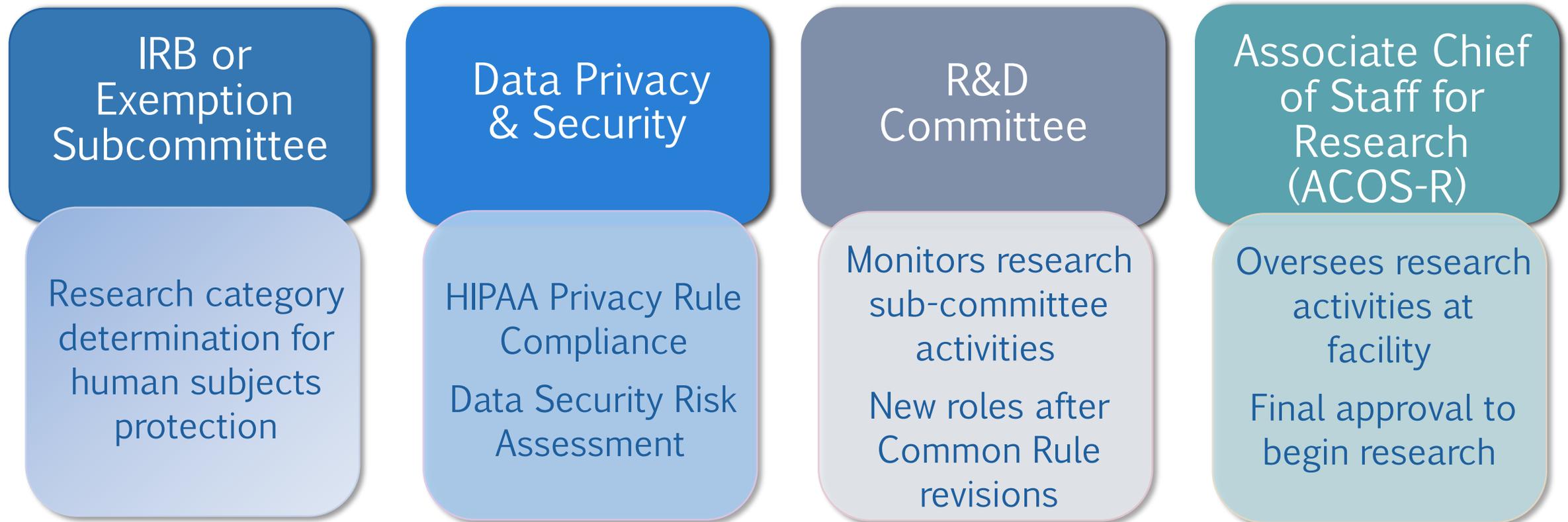
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Authority to access VA data for research



Note: You must have a VA affiliation to use VA data!

VHA Data Portal Detailed Access and Permissions Processes

<http://vaww.vhadatportal.med.va.gov/DataAccess/DataAccessOverview.aspx>
(VA Intranet)

Department of Veterans Affairs
VHA Data Portal

Data Sources Data Access Tools & Applications Resources Training Policy & Admin Support

Data Access > DART Request Process

What is DART?
Launch DART
DART is an online application for requesting permission to access VHA data.

Did you know?
Only one DART request is submitted per protocol. Any changes to this request, such as adding data or changing staff, are made through amending the initial DART request.

Quick Links
DART User Guide
Creating a DART IRB Research Request

DART Research Request Process

Overview Submitting a Request Documents & Forms Request Metrics Resources

Overview
The Data Access Request Tracker (DART) Research Request Process is for requesting permission to access VHA data for approved research projects. Visit the [Preparatory to Research Access](#) page to learn about requesting data when preparing a research funding application or protocol.

Which data sources can I request?
Many, but not all data sources and tools can be requested through DART. Here is a list of those that are available for request. Select a data source for a description of its contents and tips for requesting access.

- ADUSH Enrollment Files
- Bereaved Family Survey (BFS) Database
- BIRLS Death File
- Care Assessment Need Score (CAN Score)
- Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW)

Department of Veterans Affairs
VHA Data Portal

Home About Us Contact Us FAQ Report Broken Link

Data Sources Data Access Tools & Applications Resources Training Policy & Admin Support

Data Access > Data Access Overview

Quick View
VHA grants access to data and information systems based on how the data are going to be used.

Requesting Data Access

Overview
VHA grants access to data and information systems based on how the data will be used. Data access request processes and types of data access granted (e.g., direct access, data extracts, read-only views) depend on the data access category.

How do I request data for research and operations purposes?
VHA maintains patient health information and other data used for a variety of purposes, such as program administration, healthcare quality improvement, program evaluation, and research. Select a category below for information about requesting data access or consult the [Research vs Operations Decision Tool](#) for additional guidance.

- Operations Access:** VHA employees and contractors require access to data and information systems for healthcare quality assessments, operational reporting, auditing, planning, forecasting, and general administrative duties.
- Research Access:** VHA researchers with VA approved research protocols require access to data and information systems to conduct research.
- Preparatory to Research Access:** VHA researchers preparing research proposals require access to data and information systems to determine the feasibility of a proposed study and to demonstrate its significance.



Learn more about accessing VA Data!

Database & Methods FY21 Session 2
Requesting Access to VA Data



Linda Kok, MA

Data Access & Policy Senior Analyst, VA Information Resource Center

November 2, 2020
[Registration link](#)

Data management and analysis environment



VA Informatics and
Computing
Infrastructure

- Secure data environment
- High-speed processing platform
- Free data management and analytic tools
- VINCI data services & concierge
- VINCI Central Website
<http://vaww.vinci.med.va.gov/vincicentral/>
(VA Intranet)

VINCI Workspace.



VA
Informatics and
Computing
Infrastructure

Welcome to the VINCI Workspace

Standard and Development Workspaces

Announcements
 (1 of 3) [TIU Data Unavailable](#)
 TIU Data will be unavailable until further notice due to maintenance and updates!

Standard Workspace
Request a Workspace
Help

Important Instructions
 Click **once** on any icon below to start the application.
 When prompted to enter your login, please enter it in the form of **DomainName\Login**.
 This site is only supported on the Internet Explorer browser with Java Script enabled.
 If you are not able to see the application icons below, [click here](#) to access the VINCI Standard Workspace Desktop to access all applications.

Current folder: /

 7-Zip File Manager	 Adobe Reader XI	 ArcGIS Explorer	 ArcMap 10.5	 ArcReader 10.5	 explorer	 MATLAB R2017b	 Microsoft Access 2010	 Microsoft Excel 2010	 Microsoft InfoPath Designer 2010
 Microsoft InfoPath Filler 2010	 Microsoft PowerPoint 2010	 Microsoft Word 2010	 Notepad++	 NVivo 8	 Protege 3.3.1	 Protege 3.5	 PSPP	 putty	 R x64 3.5.1
 R x64 3.5.3	 RStudio	 SAS Universal Viewer	 SQL Server Management Studio 17	 StataMP 15 (64-bit)	 StatTransfer	 windiff	 X2Go	 SAS 9.x	 SAS Grid Tools

EHR Viewer Tools

Read-only access to patient EHR

Compensation and Pension Record Interchange (CAPRI)

- Can see patient record *one site at a time*
- Includes search function
- Uses desktop computer software application
- Direct access to JLV

Joint Longitudinal Viewer (JLV)

- VA and DoD patient records for all care sites at once
- Important for viewing CPRS + Millennium records
- Replacing VistAWeb
- VA Intranet web portal
- VistA Imaging available

Learn more:

<http://vaww.vhadataportal.med.va.gov/ToolsApplications/JLV.aspx>



- Secure web application for research data collection developed by Vanderbilt University with NIH funding
- Primary data collection tool supports compliance with 21 CFR Part 11, FISMA, HIPAA
- Used world-wide and by many of our academic affiliates
- VA instance managed by VIREC and hosted by VINCI
- Flexible, free, easy to use tool for VA users to field surveys and manage study data

Limitations: Only accessible from within VA network and not currently approved for PHI and PII storage

Visit VIREC's [REDCap page](#) for more information and supporting resources.

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VA network only
 News & new resources
 Resources for working with data

VIREc Dissemination Venues

www.virec.research.va.gov

Public-facing
 VIREc overview
 Publications & events
 Cyberseminars

http://vaww.vhadataportal.med.va.gov

VA network only
 Collaborative with NDS & VINCI
 Data source & access information

VIReC Options for Specific Questions

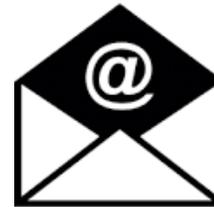
HSRData Listserv

- Community knowledge sharing
- ~1,400 VA data users
- Researchers, operations, data stewards, managers
- Subscribe by visiting <https://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/Support/HSRData-L.htm> (VA Intranet)



VIReC HelpDesk

- Individualized support



virec@va.gov

(708) 202-2413

More About VIREC Resources

Database & Methods FY21 Session 3
Meet VIREC: The Researcher's Guide to
VA Data



December 7, 2020

Quick links for VA data resources

Quick Guide: Resources for Using VA Data

<https://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/Toolkit/QG-Resources-for-Using-VA-Data.pdf> (VA Intranet)

VIReC: <https://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/Index.htm> (VA Intranet)

VIReC Cyberseminars: <https://www.virec.research.va.gov/Resources/Cyberseminars.asp>

VHA Data Portal: <https://vaww.vhadataportal.med.va.gov/Home.aspx> (VA Intranet)

VINCI: <https://vaww.vinci.med.va.gov/vincicentral/> (VA Intranet)

Health Economics Resource Center (HERC): <https://vaww.herc.research.va.gov> (VA Intranet)

CDW: <https://vaww.cdw.va.gov/Pages/CDWHome.aspx> (VA Intranet)

Archived cyberseminar: What can the HSR&D Resource Centers do for you?

https://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/archives/video_archive.cfm?SessionID=1014

Contact information

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Thank you!
Questions?