



NOV 17 2003

To: Area Directors

From: Director

Subject: Changes to Fiscal Year 2004 User Population Timeline and Adjustment Standards
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This memorandum is to notify you of changes to the fiscal year (FY) 2004 user population timeline and adjustment standards to further improve user count data quality. The new cut-off date for FY 2004 data transmission is November 15, 2004. This date will enable Headquarters to publish final user population data by December 31, 2004, which will translate into an accelerated budget formulation process and a swifter allocation of resources.

I have shared with the Tribes my desire for Indian Health Service (IHS) user population counts to be as accurate as possible. Accurate user population counts for Areas, service units, and operating units are essential for budget formulation, sound resource allocation decisions, analyses of health data, and the establishment of policies that improve the health of the American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people.

The Tribal/IHS health delivery system is composed of hundreds of sites that are very different from one another and that submit individually identifiable registration and encounter data to the National Patient Information Reporting System (NPIRS) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The data are then tabulated into user counts by applying the same standards and definitions to all sites. Given the diversity of the data sources, it is a testament to the dedication of staff at the local and Area levels that more than 98 percent of the user data meets accurate data quality standards. For two percent of sites, additional review and evidence are necessary to ensure the most accurate user count.

Effective for FY 2004 and subsequent years, user counts will be based on individually identifiable registration and encounter data received in NPIRS repositories in Albuquerque. There will be no adjustments made for non-received data except in the rare instance of information system problems that remain unresolved despite demonstrated diligence. Exceptions may include data system migration and export issues beyond the control of the reporting site.

Diligence must be demonstrated through documentation of timely and consistent exporting of data throughout the year and through the early identification (before October 1 of each year) of data problems to the Program Statistics Office and the Information Technology Support Center (ITSC). Data entry backlog will not be considered a valid reason to adjust user counts.

The Area statistical officers, the Statistics Program Office, and the ITSC are committed to providing technical assistance to sites known to have problems with exporting data to NPIRS.

The changes to both the FY 2004 timeline and the user population adjustment process will greatly enhance our ability to efficiently and effectively serve the health needs of the AI/AN Tribes and communities that depend on us. Your cooperation with these changes is appreciated.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Edna Paisano, Principle Statistician, Office of Program Support, on (301) 443-1180.

/s/ Charles W. Grim, DDS
Charles W. Grim, D.D.S., M.H.S.A.
Assistant Surgeon General

cc: Executive Staff
Area Information System Coordinators
Area Statistical Officers
Area Planning Officers
Director, Division of Information Resources
Acting Director, Information Technology Support Center
Director, Office of Program Support
Director, Division of Program Statistics
Director, Planning and Evaluation
Patient Care Statistics Team Leader
Demographic Statistics Team Leader