

To: Director
From: Co-Chair Information Systems Advisory Committee
Subject: Data Quality and Integrity Recommendation

Background

In our regularly scheduled meeting on February 22nd and 23rd in Phoenix, the Information Systems Advisory Committee (ISAC) discussed problems, issues and solutions regarding the quality of data as a product of the IHS's Resource and Patient Management System (RPMS) and the National Patient Information Reporting System (NPIRS). This recommendation is the consensus of the ISAC.

Issue

The data processing and assessment of patient demographic and workload data must be improved to assure the I/T/U of accurate statistics and reports.

Discussion

Recent reviews and studies of the data, including those from the Diabetes Data Quality activity, as it is processed through-out the IHS information system, has indicated significant problems leading to missed blocks of records, and errors in reports. This affects essential reporting critical to patient care, third party revenue, GPRA and other congressional reporting, accreditation – ORYX, facilities planning, resource distribution – LNF, and any resource justification. In our discussion, efforts to facilitate data quality need to occur at the three program levels of the IHS; service unit, Area and Headquarters. Our recommendation initially targets the immediate issues at NPIRS, and over the long term will continue to address data quality processes and actions that should occur at the Area and Service Unit or facility levels.

Recommendation

Appoint an interim Data Quality Leader to work directly with key stakeholders, program personnel and information technology staff, to be located at the NPIRS data center to meet the following short-term objectives:

Short-term Objectives:

Identify, document, and coordinate projects being requested by HQ, Areas, and programs disciplines. Coordinate competing priorities with input from the ELG.

1. Follow-up on recommendations of previous IHS/Program work group(s).
2. Coordinate documentation of Data Center reports and algorithms (flowcharts, data dictionary, and narrative) with Data Center Director/tech staff and Program specialists.
3. Improve user population algorithms (using program experts and technical staff). Improve un-duplication algorithm (using program experts, technical staff, and/or COTS software). Develop recommendations for adjustment of User Population when challenged by Area/Tribe.
4. Develop a master project plan to address short and long-term requirements (identify tasks, responsibilities, timeframes, and resource requirements) with input from Programs and ELG.
5. To pursue funding and support for permanent data quality leader to achieve the long-term goals.

Long-Term

1. Identify needed staffing/consulting services (who/where) and resources required including funding.
2. Identify software modifications needed and resources required including funding.
3. Coordinate development of best practices and cookbook approach to allow consistency in data entry, coding, use of error reports, data export, data roll-up, and data reporting.
4. Coordinate the synchronization of data exporting/data reporting from Facility through Area (where appropriate) to Data Center.