

Three DHCP Packages Ease Data Collection and Tracking

by Ed Hinkle

Oncology, Version 1.1

The VA oncology package is one component of the Decentralized Hospital Computer Program (DHCP) of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Specifications set by the American College of Surgeons' (ACOS) Commission on Cancer and the National Cancer Institute's Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program were incorporated in the oncology package design.

Oncology 1.1 is a set of modules corresponding to components of the cancer program at VA Medical Centers, including the Tumor Registry and radiation, surgical, and medical oncology. Just as the field of oncology is interdisciplinary, extending across the traditional boundaries of hospital services, so is the oncology package software, which draws from a range of data sources within DHCP. This initial release of the oncology package has software for building Tumor Registry files. The software also will facilitate the data summarization activities involved in annual reporting.

Surgical pathology, radiology, and nuclear medicine are key information sources for diagnosing cancer. The diagnosis, as stated by the attending physician in the patient medical record, is obviously included. Treatment data come from surgery, radiation, medical oncology, and new areas of experimental therapy. The extent of disease is assessed at tumor

conferences. Follow-up supportive care is a team effort. Doctors, nurses, discharge planners, rehabilitation medicine specialists, physical therapists, psychologists, chaplains, and social workers all contribute.

The data-collection arm of the hospital cancer program is the Tumor Registry. Ongoing files compile information about diagnosis, treatment, staging, and follow-up. An annual report summarizes patient data and cancer program activities (such as tumor conferences). Annual reports are reviewed at accreditation surveys. Statistics, such as percentage of current follow-up, are checked.

The oncology Patient file holds demographic data about the patient and the oncology Primary file holds clinical data about primary tumors this patient may have.

To carry out Tumor Registry accessioning and abstracting, follow-up data must be entered into both files. The oncology Primary file is where the tumor site, accession number, and sequence number must be entered. Additional facts may also be recorded, such as class of case and summary stage for annual reporting.

Enhanced abstracting and annual reporting will be available in the next version of the oncology package. Additional files will extend the package into the areas of radiation, surgical, and medical oncology.

The oncology package requires Kernel 5.01 (or higher). It does not call any other DHCP package but does require access to files from other DHCP packages including Patient, User, Institution, State, Provider, Person, Insurance, Service/Section, Topography Field, Occupation Field, Referral, ICD (International Classification of Diseases) Diagnosis, and ICD Operation/Procedure.

Documentation with Oncology 1.1 includes the *Technical Manual* (100 pages) and the *User Manual* (65 pages). Oncology 1.1 is available to M Technology Association members on magtape, 5 1/4" or 3 1/2" disks for \$20, or directly from the VA.

Allergy Tracking System, Version 2.2

The Allergy Tracking System (ATS) is another DHCP component. The ATS objective is to track and report patient allergy and adverse reaction data. ATS needs Kernel 6.5+, MAS 5+, and National Drug File 2+ to function properly.

Doctors, nurses, other clinicians, and clerks enter data into ATS. They only are required to enter data pertinent for a particular allergy/adverse reaction. If the allergy/adverse reaction was observed at the site, data pertaining to any possible legal action could be tracked. These data are made available to users of other hospital services to avoid errors in patient care. Entering the date and time the patient chart

and the patient's ID band were marked (indicating the patient's reaction to the particular allergen) are two other elements. ATS verifiers validate the accuracy of data entered into ATS. Verifiers may be clinical pharmacists, dietitians, or other clinical personnel. Automated mail bulletins are sent to verifiers when an allergy/adverse reaction is entered.

The 185 pages of documentation with ATS 2.2 include these manuals: *Technical, User, Installation, and Security*. ATS 2.2 is available to MTA members on magtape, 5 1/4" or 3 1/2" disks for \$20, or directly from the VA.

Dietetics System, Version 4.01

The Dietetics System is a fully integrated clinical dietetics, dietetic-order, food-production, and management system. It is one module of the VA's DHCP. The Dietetics System requires Kernel and MAS modules for proper initialization and operation.

Major Dietetics System functions include ordering dietetic services, capturing required statistics, generating reports, and indicating activities necessary to prepare food required by different clinical diets.

There are many decision-support functions to help the clinical dietitian

quickly develop individualized diets, dietary instructions, and tube-feeding requirements.

The Dietetics System includes more than 1,300 pages of documentation. The package is available to M Technology Association members for \$150 on magnetic tape, 5 1/4" and 3 1/2" disks. For more details, see "MUGPAL \$VIEW" in *MUG Quarterly* 20, 3. **M**

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Ed Hinkle manages computer operations for the M Technology Association.

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