



Vermont . . .

Department of Banking, Insurance, Securities and Health Care Administration Division of Health Care Administration

Release of Hospital Discharge Data Policy Effective November, 2002

The Vermont Department of Banking, Insurance, Securities and Health Care Administration (BISHCA) collects certain information from Vermont hospitals pursuant to its general authority under 18 V. S. A. §9410 as well as 18 V. S. A. §9457, which provides that:

All information required to be filed under this subchapter shall be made available to the public upon request, provided that individual patients or health care practitioners shall not be directly or indirectly identifiable.

The Vermont Department of Health (VDH), under contract with BISHCA, handles the distribution of the Vermont hospital discharge data.

There are two files for hospital discharge data including a public use file and a research file. The public use file is available for a small fee with the understanding that the data are not to be used to directly or indirectly identify individuals. Requests for the public use file may be submitted directly to the VDH (See contact information on the following pages). A research file with non-public data elements may be made available upon approval by BISHCA to individuals or agencies conducting *bona fide* research that will benefit Vermonters. Requests for the research file must be submitted to BISHCA for review and approval (See contact information on the following pages).

REQUESTING A PUBLIC USE FILE

Conditions of Release

Release of public use data is subject to the following conditions, which the requestor agrees to upon accepting copies of the data:

1. The data may not be used in any manner that attempts to or does identify, directly or indirectly, any individual patient or physician.
2. The requestor agrees to incorporate the following, or a substantially similar, disclaimer in all reports or publications that include public use data:

“Hospital discharge data for use in this study were supplied by the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems-Network Services Organization (VAHHS-NSO) and the Vermont Department of Banking, Insurance, Securities and Health Care Administration (BISHCA). All analyses, interpretations or conclusions based on these data are solely that of [the requestor]. VAHHS-NSO and BISHCA disclaim responsibility for any such analyses, interpretations or conclusions. In addition, as the data have been edited and processed by VAHHS-NSO, BISHCA assumes no responsibility for errors in the data

due to coding or processing by hospitals, VAHHS-NSO or any other organization, including [the requestor].”

Public Use File Data Elements

Elements in both inpatient and ambulatory surgery data sets

Age (in the following groups)-

Under 1	35-39	60-64
1-17	40-44	65-69
18-24	45-49	70-74
25-29	50-54	75+
30-34	55-59	

Sex

ZIP code -

(3-digit ZIP for most of Vermont and all other states; combined 058 and 059 area; 5-digit ZIP for areas with a population of over 10,000 (12 ZIP Codes))

Hospital of discharge

Hospital service area

Patient days (length of stay)

Discharge status

Principal payment source

Total charges

Year of discharge

Additional elements in the inpatient dataset only

Admission source

Type of admission

ICU days

CCU days

SCU days

Diagnosis related group (DRG)

Major diagnostic category (MDC)

Grouper used to assign DRG and MDC

Principal diagnosis and up to 19 secondary diagnoses

Principal procedure, class and day, and up to 19 secondary procedures, classes and days

Same day flag – flags those admitted and discharged on the same day

Additional elements in the ambulatory surgery dataset only

Principal diagnosis

and up to 2 secondary diagnoses

Principal procedure

and up to 2 secondary procedures

Information for ordering the public use file:

Public use data are available by calendar year for inpatient discharges and ambulatory surgery discharges. To order the public use data contact:

Vermont Department of Health
Public Health Statistics
108 Cherry Street, PO Box 70
Burlington, VT 05402-0070
(802) 863-7300

REQUESTING RESEARCH FILES WITH NON-PUBLIC DATA ELEMENTS

Conditions of Release

The State of Vermont recognizes that there may be studies requiring use of specific data elements that are not included in the public use file. BISHCA reviews and either approves or disapproves requests for data files containing non-public through the following process.

In order to request a research file with non-public data elements, a requestor must submit a completed Agreement for Release of Non-Public Data Elements of Hospital Discharge Data. Under this agreement, requestors agree not to disclose or re-release the data provided by BISHCA. The form requires a thorough description of the following: research project and proposed use of the data; whether the proposed study has been granted approval through an institutional review board or review process; a list of the specific non-public data elements needed and rationale for specific use of each non-public data element pertaining to the study; identification of subsets of the file that limit data request to only the records needed for the particular study; and description of the organization's data security policies and procedures.

BISHCA's technical and legal staff reviews each agreement and advises the Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Health Care Administration. The Deputy Commissioner approves or disapproves requests. Approval or disapproval is based on the credentials of the researcher, the merits of the research project, and whether or not the potential benefits to Vermonters outweigh any risk of breach of confidentiality. Approved requests are forwarded to VDH for processing.

In addition to all fields on the public use file, any of the following fields may be requested in a research file:

- Admission Hour
- Admission Date
- Date of Birth
- Age (single year)
- Race
- ZIP code (5-digit)
- Discharge Date
- Principal Procedure Date
- Secondary Procedure Dates
- Readmission Indicator
- Attending physician (hospital-specific code without identifiers)
- Procedure physician (hospital-specific code without identifiers)

Information for ordering the Data Users Agreement for requesting a research file:

The Agreement for Release of Non-Public Data Elements of Hospital Discharge Data form may be obtained from:

Vermont Division of Health Care Administration
89 Main Street, Drawer 20
Montpelier, VT 05620-3601
(802) 828-2900
Attention: Director, Analysis and Data Management