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Hospital Numbered Letter
Volume 3, Number 4
April 14, 2000

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1. Proposed Changes to Hospital Rules
Operational and Policy

Readers of the last THCIC *Hospital Numbered Letter* (V3 N3) were informed that THCIC is proposing changes to its hospital rules. The proposed rules will be published in the April 21 edition of the *Texas Register*. A copy of the proposed rules will also be available that same date on the Council's web site, www.thcic.state.tx.us. Click on *Council Rules*, then on *Proposed Amendments* under the hospital rule heading.

The changes primarily consist of
- Defining the elements included in the Public Use Data File (a summarized list follows)
- Legislatively mandated additions that add definitions, minimum cell size protection of physician identity, the creation of a Scientific Review Panel for data requests outside the PUDF, and the inclusion of a Certification Process for hospitals.

Summary List of PUDF Data Elements
The following list is provided to facilitate communications regarding the PUDF. **A detailed, element by element list is provided in the proposed rules and should be referenced when programming decisions are considered**.

- Hospital/Facility Identifying Information
- Patient Demographics
- Patient Length of Stay, Admit Type, and Discharge Status
- Payment Source
- Diagnoses (Admit, Principal and 8 Others)
- Surgical Codes (Principal and Others)
- Diagnosis Groups (APR DRG, HCFA DRG, Mortality Risk, and Illness Severity)

The public (which includes hospitals) has until noon **May 22nd** (30 calendar days) to make comments on the proposed rules. Written comments should be directed to Jim Loyd, Executive Director, Texas Health Care Information Council, 4900 N. Lamar, Suite 3407, Austin, TX 78751. For those interested in

delivering their comments in person or hearing the comments of others, **a public forum to receive comments has been scheduled for Wednesday, May 10th at 9:30 a.m. in room 5501 at THCIC's headquarters in the Brown Heatly Building in Austin**. *It is strongly encouraged that comments be provided in writing and that comments reference specific sections or paragraphs in the proposed rules.*

2. Certification Training
Operational

If you have not yet done so, it is important that you sign up **today** for the upcoming certification training in the city closest to you. This training is an essential component of preparing you and your hospital to succeed in the immediately forthcoming Certification Process stage of THCIC's collection of hospital discharge data. The training includes valuable insight gained through the recent pilot project. The registration form is available on THCIC's web site www.thcic.state.tx.us. Click on *Reporting Guidelines and Edits*, then *Hospital Data Certification Information*. Dates for the upcoming training are April 25 in Lubbock, April 26 in Dallas, April 27 in Houston, April 28 in Corpus Christi, and May 2 in Austin. Additional sessions might be offered, but dates/cities are uncertain at this time.

3. Basic Training on Data Submission and Corrections
Operational

On May 31, 2000 THCIC will host a basic data submission and correction training session in Austin at 4900 North Lamar, Brown Heatly Building, room 1410. The training session will begin at 9 a.m. and is anticipated to finish around 3 p.m.

Designed for hospital staff new to THCIC's hospital discharge data collection project, the session will address the following topics: data flow, data submission requirements specific to THCIC, data acceptance or rejection responses by THCIC contractors (THIN and CCS), and use of THCIC's data correction software. Registration information will be posted on the web site soon.

4. THCIC to move towards Web-based Communications
Policy and Operational

Texas Comptroller Carole Rylander has emphasized that agencies should actively pursue the efficiencies of e-mail and the world wide web. THCIC adopted this approach for communicating with HMO contacts early last year.

THCIC is moving toward implementing this approach with hospitals. For this reason, it is essential that hospital contacts have access to THCIC's web site. Modifications and upgrades to the site occur weekly. The designated contacts at hospitals are strongly encouraged to obtain regular access to e-mail as well.

5. Delinquent Data Reporting
Policy

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is issuing penalty notices to hospitals concerning the delinquent reporting of 1Q99 and/or 2Q99 data at the rate of 10 per week. Institutions that were at least six months late received notices concerning 1Q99, and those at least three months late received notices about 2Q99. Letters will be sent soon to hospitals delinquent in reporting 3Q99 and/or 4Q99 data.

To take advantage of the lesser penalty that these letters offer, hospitals that have received letters from the OAG must contact THCIC's Executive Director within the specified time period. The Council has structured penalties to increase with continued noncompliance. The failure to submit data in time for inclusion in the Council's public use data file (PUDF) for that quarter will carry a substantially larger penalty. **The *"no-later-than"* date for submission for including 2nd Q99 data to be included in the Council's first PUDF is June 1, 2000**.

Hospitals should be aware that the issuing of a penalty in no way negates the hospital's continued obligation to report the missing data. If the missing data is not provided before the next deadline, the hospital will be assessed an additional penalty.

6. Security and Confidentiality Issue
Policy and Operations

For security reasons, e-mail requests to THCIC's HelpDesk require that you supply the hospital's THCIC ID# (6 digit numeric) and THCIC Code (3 digits, 1 alpha followed by 2 numbers). E-mail requests not containing this information will get a return message asking for this information. These codes should be placed IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF THE E-MAIL. Hospital contacts wishing to verify that the codes they are using are correct should contact Dee Shaw at (512) 424-6490, or dshaw@thcic.state.tx.us.

7. Transmission of Data
Operational

Remember to stay on-line and wait for a receipt when you transmit your hospital's data electronically. Read the receipt and keep a copy in your files. If the receipt indicates that any of your records were rejected, these records must be resubmitted as NEW submissions.

8. THCIC HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PROJECT
KEY ACTIVITIES AND DUE DATES AS OF 4/14/00
Newly Added or Revised Activities/Dates in Italics

Training Conduct Certification Training sessions - Lubbock (4/25), Dallas (4/26), Houston (4/27), Corpus Christi (4/28), Austin (5/2)	Apr 25 - May 02, '00
Conduct Basic Training in Data Submission and Corrections -- Austin ONLY	*May 31, '00*
Submission and Certification 1st Quarter '99 certification data and reports distributed to all hospitals	May 02, '00
Last day for submitting 2nd Quarter '99 data to THIN	*May 31, '00*
Hospitals' 1st Quarter '99 Certification Letter due	Jul 31, '00
2nd Quarter '99 certification data and reports distributed to all hospitals	July 31, '00
Last day for submitting 3rd Quarter '99 data to THIN	*August 1, '00*
Hospitals' 2nd Quarter '99 Certification Letter due	Sept 30, '00
Create Public Use Data File 1st Quarter '99 Available for Internal Use	Sep 01, '00
1st & 2nd Quarter '99 Available for Public Request	Dec 15, '00

Questions?
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Web site: www.thcic.state.tx.us