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Budget News

The Federal Government is now under a Continuing Resolution (CR) through March 6, 2009. The CR provides funding, at rates of operation not to exceed fiscal year 2008; however, there will be restrictions on how we can use these funds and what actually is allocated to us. Complicating the picture is of course the very difficult financial situation of the Country. How this all plays out for NCHS and the VSCP is anyone’s guess. As you may remember, we have funded the VSCP through August of 2008 and have committed to paying for the remainder of the calendar year. I will keep you informed as I am informed about our budget.

VSCP Contracts

We plan to continue using Purchase Orders for the remainder of the calendar year. We had hoped to have 5-year VSCP contracts in place beginning with 2009. At this point I am unsure if we can meet that time frame but hopefully we will be close. Whatever slippage we have will most likely be covered by Purchase Orders. Many of you were not around when the last VSCP contracts were negotiated but do not be concerned because the process and the content will be significantly different so all of us will be starting at the same point. There will be both a pre-solicitation and a post-solicitation conference call with all States that will help explain the process and the content of the contract. The negotiations will take place individually with each State. As soon as I know a little more about the specifics of the contract process, I will send a message to all the VSCP Directors.
Relocation of NCHS RTP Facility

On Friday, October 10, 2008, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Research Triangle Park (RTP) North Carolina facility will be closed as they move from the Sycamore Building to their new location in the Catawba Building. They will reopen on Tuesday, October 14, 2008. All telephone numbers will remain the same. In addition, all mail should continue to be sent to the current post office box used for mailing: P.O. Box 12214, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709. For visitors, the Catawba Building address is 3210 East Highway 54, Suite 200, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709.

Field Representative/Security Coordinator Workshop

NCHS and NAPHSIS are planning a Field Representative/Security Coordinator workshop, to be held April 14-16, 2009 in Madison, Wisconsin. Areas of concentration will include technology impacting field representatives, identifying fraudulent documents, document vulnerabilities, hospital audits, getting results working with law enforcement, improving data quality, among others. Please indicate your interest in sending staff to this workshop by answering the following questions, if you did not respond to my September 16 e-mail:

1) Would you send staff to this workshop and if so, how many?

2) List other topics that you feel should be discussed at this workshop?

3) Are any of your staff interested in presenting at this workshop? If so, which topic?

Please send your responses to Julie Kowaleski at jkowaleski@cdc.gov. Thanks so much for your time in responding to these questions.

NCHS Data Users Conference Includes Many Presentations from DVS Staff

DVS staff members organized several sessions and gave presentations on the data files and analytic uses of DVS data sets at NCHS' biennial Data Users Conference (DUC) in August. Sessions were presented on birth, infant health and perinatal mortality, and mortality data from the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS); the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG); HIV/AIDS-Related Data at NCHS; adolescent sexual risk behaviors and reproductive health; and the relationship between race and ethnicity, selected demographic characteristics and health. The latter three sessions included NSFG as well as NVSS data. The DUC also featured a hands-on workshop for VitalStats, DVS' interactive data access tool; the workshop was offered twice at the conference. DVS also featured two exhibits at the conference, one on the variety of different vital statistics products and one on the National Death Index.

Provisional Birth Counts Show Record Number of Babies Born in 2007

According to the monthly counts of births published in the National Vital Statistics Reports, US births increased to an historic high, 4,315,000, in 2007. Media
interest in this was intense. The last previous high number was in the peak year of the baby boom, 1957. We look forward to having details later this fall, including trends for teenagers and nonmarital births, as well as for key infant health indicators such as low birthweight and preterm birth.

**Reporting of Rare Causes of Deaths of Public Health Significance**

Each year as we prepare the mortality data for publication, we flag rare causes of death and ask State Registrars for confirmation from the certifier. Some of these causes are of particular importance (e.g., measles, mumps, diphtheria, polio) and it is critical that we have confirmation. We do not want to publish deaths due to these causes unless we know for sure that they are confirmed. On the other hand, while most of these turn out to be due to late effects of the disease, in cases where they are due to the active disease, we need to be able to publish this information. Unfortunately, we often do not get confirmation through the registrar's office. We are considering asking the CDC disease surveillance folks to follow back on the rare causes with epidemiologists in the state of occurrence. As we move to EDRs and reengineer our own systems, we will be able to provide them with this information as we receive it and very soon after the death occurs. This should be an important contribution to their surveillance systems. Please give me your thoughts on this.

**Update on HL7 Vital Records Standards Development Activities**

State registrars, providers, vital records systems developers, and other interested stakeholders have been actively participating in bi-weekly conference calls supported by NCHS for the development of an HL7 Electronic Health Record System (EHR-S) Vital Records (VR) Functional Profile. The HL7 Vital Records Profile will facilitate leveraging electronic health record (EHR) systems to capture vital records (birth and death) data at the point of contact or point of care. The participants have been divided into two work groups: Birth WG and Death WG. The progress to date has included assessing and mapping the Model Vital Events Registration System business functional requirements that were developed through collaboration with NAPHSIS and the Social Security Administration to the EHR-S Functional Model. Currently, the WGs have been focused on reviewing and mapping the U.S. Standard birth and death certificate edit specifications to the HL7 EHR-S model. The mapping exercises have been serving as a mechanism to determine where functional requirements may need to be added or modified to meet the requirements for capturing vital records data as outlined in the edit specifications. Subsequently, the workgroup will proceed to evaluate every EHR-S functional requirement to assess if they are applicable to the vital records processes and where additional requirements are needed. We are seeking additional participation by VR stakeholders and subject matter experts to join this work group. Please contact Hetty Khan ([HKhan@cdc.gov](mailto:HKhan@cdc.gov)) or Michelle Williamson ([MWilliamson@cdc.gov](mailto:MWilliamson@cdc.gov)) if you are interested in participating in this VR standards activity.
Additionally, several state representatives (MN, GA and WA) have been collaborating with NCHS/Division of Vital Statistics and NAPHSIS on the development of a Vital Records Domain Analysis Model (VR DAM). The goal of the VR DAM is to identify the birth and death registration work flow processes and stakeholders. The VR DAM will serve to guide future design and implementation efforts for standardizing the electronic data exchanges between vital records systems and other public and private information systems to meet current and emerging needs. NCHS is planning to host a webinar towards the end of the year with interested vital records stakeholders to present the VR DAM and to solicit broader feedback on the model. Please contact Michelle Williamson (MWilliamson@cdc.gov) if you may be interested in participating in the webinar and serving as a reviewer of the VR DAM.

**NSFG Research Conference at NCHS in October**

General registration is now open for the 2008 Research Conference on the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), hosted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) on Thursday and Friday, October 16 and 17, 2008. The Conference will take place at NCHS in Hyattsville, Maryland. The purpose of this Research Conference is to present and discuss original, unpublished analyses of the National Survey of Family Growth, with focus on the most recent data from Cycle 6 (2002). Topics of the sessions include: contraception and fertility, teens and family planning/reproductive health services, men and fatherhood, cohabitation and nonmarital fertility, and marriage and cohabitation. The conference is free and open to all. Anyone interested in attending may register at: [www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg.htm).

**New Reports**


A new report on the quality of race and Hispanic origin reporting on death certificates was published on October 1, 2008: "The Validity of Race and Hispanic Origin Reporting on Death Certificates in the United States," by Elizabeth Arias, William Schauman, Karl Eschbach, Paul Sorlie and Eric Backlund, *Vital and Health Statistics, Series 2, No. 148*. This report presents the results of an evaluation study of the validity of race and Hispanic origin reporting on death certificates and its impact on race and Hispanic origin specific mortality estimates. The National Longitudinal Mortality Study (NLMS) was used to
evaluate death certificate classification of race and Hispanic origin by comparing
death certificate with survey race/ethnicity classification for a sample of
decedents identified in the NLMS. The NLMS consists of a series of Current
1979-1998. To identify and measure the effects of misclassification on mortality
estimates pooled 1999-2001 national vital statistics mortality data and Census
2000 population data were used to estimate and compare observed and
corrected for death certificate misclassification race/ethnicity specific death rates.

DVS published "Infant Mortality Statistics from the 2005 Period Linked/Birth
Infant Death Data Set," in late July. Much of the media attention focused on the
continued large racial and ethnic disparities in infant mortality. The 2005 report
also includes an analysis of the contribution of preterm-related causes to infant
mortality patterns. RSB analysts TJ Mathews and Marian MacDorman wrote this

A comprehensive new report on adoption, based largely on the 2002 National
Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), was published in early August and received
much media attention. RSB analyst and author Jo Jones was interviewed by a
number of reporters. Their stories were posted on the web and published in over
25 newspapers and web announcements nation-wide, and led to more than 150
related articles. The report, "Adoption Experiences of Women and Men and
Demand for Children to Adopt by Women 18-44 Years of Age in the United
States, 2002," is available at:

Coming Attractions
Later in the fall, we expect to be publishing a number of reports from the birth
and perinatal mortality files. These include "Births: Final Data for 2006," "Births:
Preliminary Data for 2007," and "Fetal and Perinatal Mortality, United States,
2005." Also coming soon are two reports in NCHS' new data release series,
NCHS Data Briefs. The forthcoming Data Briefs focus on trends in infant
mortality and the characteristics of men and women who adopt children. The
National Death Index will soon be publishing its new CD entitled Names Count!
containing the frequencies of first and last names for all deaths from 1979-2005.

VSCP File Receipt Status (as of September 26, 2008)
2007 Births - We have received 2007 birth data from all 57 (including 25 revisers)
registration areas. The closeout process for individual state files is now
underway. We ask for your cooperation in our pursuit of your final update file
transmissions for 2007 as soon as possible to resolve all problems identified by
DAEB staff. Complete and updated 2007 files should have been received by
June 30.

2007 Demographic Deaths - We have received 2007 demographic death data
from all 57 (including 25 revisers) registration areas and will be releasing the
2007 preliminary file from DAEB to Hyattsville staff in early October for further
processing and analysis. There are still 3 areas (CA, GA, and TX) that are below the desired preliminary file threshold of 75% completeness. We ask for your cooperation in our pursuit of your final file transmissions for 2007 to resolve all missing and problem records identified by DAEB staff. Complete and updated 2007 files should have been received by June 30.

2007 Medical Deaths - We have received 2007 medical data from all 57 registration areas and will be releasing the 2007 preliminary file from DAEB to Hyattsville staff in early October for further processing and analysis. There are still 5 areas (IL, LA, NM, PR and TX) that are below the desired preliminary file threshold of 75% completeness. We ask for your cooperation in our pursuit of your final file transmissions for 2007 to resolve all missing and problem records identified by DAEB and MMCB staff. Complete and updated 2007 files should have been received by June 30.

2007 Fetal Deaths - We have received 2007 fetal death data from 52 (all except GA, NV, PA, TX, and WA) registration areas. Complete and updated 2007 files should have been received by June 30.

2008 Births - We have received 2008 birth data from 52 (all except AS, MI, MP, VI and NYC) registration areas. As of now, we should have received in excess of 60% of 2008 birth data from each area.

2008 Demographic Deaths - We have received 2008 demographic death data from 51 (all except AS, CA, IL, MP, NV and VI) registration areas. As of now, we should have received in excess of 50% of 2008 demographic death data from each area.

2008 Medical Deaths - We have received 2008 medical death data from 46 registration areas. As of now, we should have received in excess of 50% of 2008 medical data from each area.

2009 All Events - Within the next month we will be sending our annual requests to all registration areas for updated copies of certificates, worksheets, procedures and file documentation. It is important that we receive this documentation from all areas, but particularly so for those planning to implement revised datasets anytime in 2009. Also, please continue to keep us informed of your certificate revision plans.

New State Registrar’s Corner
Primary contacts in DVS include:

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