

Maine Health Data Processing Center

Annual Report 2002

Introduction

With its database of over 30 million new medical, pharmacy, and dental claims each year, the Health Claims Data Bank will be an invaluable resource to policy makers and others as they seek solutions to Maine's health care cost and access crisis.

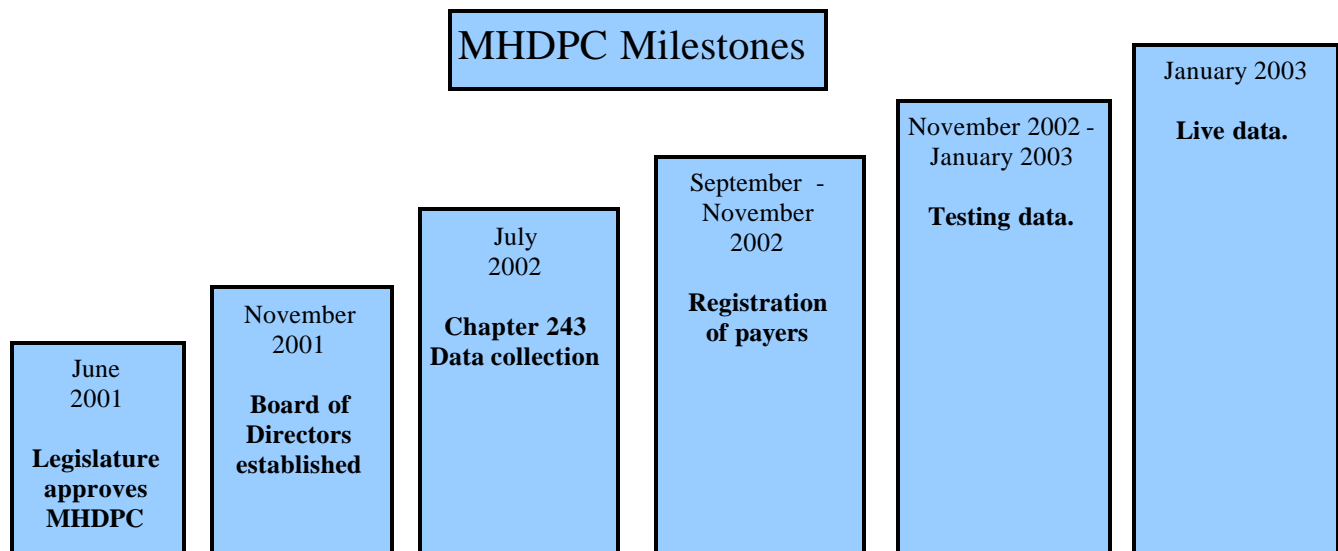
In 2001 the Maine Legislature and Governor King approved the establishment of what is believed to be the nation's first comprehensive statewide Health Care Claims Data Bank. Beginning in January 2003, every health insurer and third party administrator that pays claims for Maine residents will be required to submit a copy of all paid claims to the Maine Health Data Organization (MHDO), the state health data agency with the statutory authority to collect health care data in Maine. A new entity called the Maine Health Data Processing Center will build, edit, and verify the accuracy of the database. The Data Processing Center draws upon the experience and technical expertise of the Maine Health Information Center (MHIC) to develop and manage a system capable

of handling over 30 million health insurance claims submitted by approximately 160 payers.

The creation of the new Claims Data Bank represents an important step toward solving critically important problems that affect the health of all Maine people.

The information contained in the Claims Data Bank can be analyzed in many ways to help health care providers, public health officials, health insurers, researchers, and others better understand a wide variety of issues that can lead to more informed decision-making about how to improve the health status of Maine people, moderate the growth of costs, extend insurance coverage, and improve quality.

MHDPC Milestones



Maine Health Care Claims Data Bank

The Data Bank consists of four types of data: paid medical claims, paid pharmacy claims, paid dental claims, and eligible member demographics. Data are submitted monthly by all commercial payers and third party administrators who pay claims for Maine residents. Medicaid and Medicare data will be added at a later date. The Data Bank will not include information on the uninsured.

The claims databases will include a record of payments made by the plans as well as estimated payments made by the members (copay, deductible, and coinsurance). The conditions being treated and the types of services rendered will be indicated by such codes as ICD-9 diagnosis codes, CPT procedure codes, drug codes, and dental procedure codes. The name of the provider, specialty code, and geographic location will be contained in the provider portion of each claim record. The database will track dates of service, quantities of service, and the setting in which the service was provided.

On the patient side, the databases will capture the type of contract (single, 2 person, etc.), type of insurance coverage (HMO, POS, indemnity, etc.), date of birth, zip code of residence, gender, relationship to subscriber, and an identifier to track the individual across the various types of data. Rules now under development by the Maine Health Data Organization will govern specifically what data will be released to the public.

The claims databases are built around the date the claim was paid rather than when the service was provided. For example, the 2003 database will contain all payments made that year. The 2003 claims database will also contain payments for services in 2002, 2001, etc. Researchers will combine the paid databases to select the majority of the services rendered in a given year.

The eligibility database will be built on a monthly basis with one record for each individual with coverage during that month. The eligibility file includes members with claims as well as members without claims that month.

Maine Health Data Processing Center

The Maine Health Data Processing Center (MHDPC) is charged with building, maintaining and verifying the accuracy of a huge healthcare claims data bank designed to meet the needs of a wide variety of users. In order to accomplish this, the MHDPC requires a system that will allow 400+ monthly data files from 150+ data submitters to be securely transferred to the MHDPC, loaded into relational tables, checked for problems and data integrity, and passed to the MHDPC. Under a management service agreement with Maine Health Information Center, the system is being developed by a staff of eight with a wide variety of experience and technical skills in building, evaluating and managing health care claims databases.

There are many challenges with building a system for the Data Bank:

- The system must be secure to assure the most rigorous possible protection to patient information and proprietary data.
- The system must know who is supposed to submit data.
- To minimize the costs associated with staffing a “help desk”, the system must be user-friendly for the payers.
- The system must be efficient and user friendly so that a small staff can handle the actual processing of the data in a timely manner. The system should include as much automatic checking and flagging of data as is reasonable.
- The system must provide the necessary feedback to data submitters that they would need in order to find and fix any issues with their data files.
- The system must be written in a modular fashion to facilitate maintenance and future modifications.

Relying primarily on state of the art Oracle and Java software, the MHDPC development staff is focusing

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Data Processing Center

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on a system with the following components:

1. The MHDPC website (www.mhdpc.org) provides general information (frequently asked questions, rules and regulations, etc.) as well as providing access to on-line registration for submitters and a secure user services area for authenticated, registered submitters. This is an effective tool for communicating between MHDPC staff and payers in an efficient manner.
2. The Online Registration Utility maintains all information about the data submitters – company contact, file types to be submitted and contacts for each file type. Payers use this function on the web site to register with MHDPC and to update contact information. Since email is the primary means of communicating with data submitters, the registration utility and database are critical.
3. The MHDPC Encryption Utility securely encodes sensitive data fields to protect patient privacy. This step must be performed on site by the payer. The utility is a self-installing Windows executable which accepts as input a properly formatted MHDPC text

data file (either DOS/Windows or Unix text file format), performs preliminary checks on the data, encodes patient identifiers, and compresses and password protects the text file. The compression step is to conserve resources. It reduces the storage space required by files transferred to CD or diskette and it reduces the transfer times of files sent via the secure Web upload.

4. The secure MHDPC User Services Web site uses SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) to establish a secure link between the Web server at the MHDPC and the Web browser at the submitter site. This allows the data submitter to securely upload data via the web.

5. The MHDPC Tracker application allows a single person to manage the loading and primary verification of incoming data. Tracker is responsible for automatically moving a data submission through the system while constantly monitoring and recording its status. Internally the application provides access to various reports, screens, and queries that are required to manage the entire process. Tracker automatically creates status reports for the payers that are available on the Web via secure log on.

Maine Health Care Data Processing Center

Manager

Suanne Singer

Development Team

Jean Bourg
Travis Caron
Michael Day
Gloria McCann
Don Schroeder
Adam Thebeau
Paul Tousignant

In 2002 the MHDO contributed nearly \$112,000 (which represents 60 percent of the MHDPC's annual expenses) to the development of the Health Claims Data Bank. The MHIC contributed the remaining 40 percent.

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