



Maine Health Data Processing Center

Annual Report 2004

In mid-February 2005 Governor John Baldacci will announce the “opening” of the **new Maine Health Care Claims Data**.

The Data Bank has been developed through the Maine Health Data Processing Center, a non-profit public-private partnership between the Maine Health Data Organization (a state agency) and the Maine Health Information Center (an independent, nonprofit health data research organization).

Under development since 2001, the **Data Bank** is expected to become a rich new source of information about how Maine people use health care services across the state, as well as what is paid for that care.

Beginning in January 2003, the **Data Bank** began to be populated with a wide range of health care utilization and cost data that has never before been collected and made available to the public. At the end of 2004 the Data Bank contained 79 million records.

2004 Accomplishments

In 2004 more than 150 private insurance companies and health plan administrators (TPAs) located throughout the nation submitted paid claims data on the Maine residents that they insure.

The Data Processing Center’s primary focus has been the processing of data from health insurers and TPAs. Data files are submitted regularly by all commercial carriers and third party administrators covering Maine residents. Payers with more than 1,000 covered lives submit data on a monthly basis.

Each file is passed through a rigorous set of edits and validation checks. Those files with data problems that exceed the percent of errors allowed for one or more data elements are rejected for correction and resubmission.

During the first half of 2004 submissions from approximately 30 annual submitters who were preparing to submit data for the first time were tested. Annual submitters cover from 1 to 499 Maine residents.

By the summer of 2004, the Center began to transfer the first copies of claims and eligibility data to the Maine Health Data Organization (MHDO) on a test basis. In addition to handling a huge volume of records, the transfer is a complex process with many distinct steps for each type of data. The transfer included summary reports which attest to the basic quality and completeness of the data.

One of the major developments of 2004 was the news that both MaineCare (Medicaid) and Medicare claims data are now expected to be added to the Data Bank in 2005. When that process is complete, the Data Bank will contain utilization and cost data relating to nearly all Maine citizens with private or public health insurance coverage.

The Center also has continued to enhance the processing system in 2004. The enhancements focused on increasing system efficiency and improving communications with payers through system generated emails detailing problems. By the fall of 2004, processing of submissions for payers with fewer than 100,000 lives was completed within 2 hours of submission and data

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integrity review and notification was completed within 2 working days. Although there was a tremendous effort made by the payers to submit quality data in 2003, the first half of 2004 includes processing and re-processing of as much as one third of the 2003 submissions.

In 2004 there were 5,280 submissions from 145 distinct payers with a total of 99 million records. Approximately two thirds of these submissions were accepted.

2005 Goals

The Center's primary goal in 2005 is to complete the transfer to the MHDO in preparation for its public release. This release will include paid claims data submitted over an 18-month period from January of 2003 to June of 2004.

In order to make the data accessible to researchers and others, the Center began development in late 2004 of a Data Dictionary for the MHDO to distribute when it releases the data. The Data Dictionary will document the data elements collected and the valid codes. It will also include information from the payer notes that are used in the editing process.

In 2004 the Center also began the complex task of developing a provider reference table to assign a single MHDO identifier for each unique provider. The work will be done in phases with Maine hospitals being identified initially. The second phase will be to assign each provider a standard specialty code. Both of these phases will be completed before the public release of data by MHDO. A third phase—assigning a unique provider number to the non-Maine hospital providers—will be an ongoing activity.

A New Resource For Understanding

The Data Bank is based on the fundamental belief that more data is needed in order to better understand and address the factors driving up the use and cost of health care services in Maine. Health insurance claims appear to be the best available source for this information at this time. Claims data is also considered to be a useful resource for organizations working to improve the health status of Maine people and to ensure that high quality care is provided in hospitals, doctors' offices and other locations throughout the state.

Maine's Health Care Claims Data Bank contains detailed information about how Maine people use every element of the health care system, from primary care to outpatient services; from hospital care and prescription drug purchases to mental health services and alternative care.

If health insurance is used to pay for the service or product, that information will be collected and integrated into the Data Bank by the Maine Health Data Processing Center. The Data Bank does not include information about Maine's uninsured population because no claims are involved in the payment for their care.

The information contained in the Data Bank can be analyzed in many ways to help us better understand a wide variety of issues and make more informed decisions about how we can improve the health status of Maine people, moderate the growth of costs, extend insurance coverage, and improve quality.

There are rigorous safeguards built into the system to protect individual patient privacy at every step of the process. All information that could be used, for example, to identify an individual is encrypted by insurers before it is submitted to the Maine Health Data Processing Center. As a further safeguard, all encrypted patient identifiers are encrypted a second time before the data is deposited into the Data Bank.

What Information Is Included In The Claims Data Bank?

The Data Bank includes medical, pharmacy and dental payments made by insurers as well as estimated payments made by the individuals who are insured, such as co-pays, deductibles and co-insurance. Clinical data including ICD-9 diagnosis codes, CPT procedure codes, drug codes and dental procedure codes will indicate the types of conditions being treated and the types of services rendered.

The Data Bank tracks dates of service, quantities of service, and the setting in which the service was provided. On the patient side, the Data Bank

captures the type of contract (single, 2 person, etc.), type of insurance coverage (HMO, POS, indemnity, etc.), date of birth, zip code of residence, gender, and relationship to subscriber.

Background

The Maine Health Data Processing Center was incorporated shortly after the Maine Legislature and Governor Angus King approved its creation in 2001 to build what is believed to be the nation's first comprehensive statewide health care claims database. In 2001 the Center focused on establishing the Board, developing bylaws, and performing other administrative tasks associated with the organization.

Maine Health Data Processing Center

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