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June 2005

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<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/hmis/index.cfm>

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Hmisinfo@hud.gov

HUD Issues Guidance for States with Privacy Laws that Conflict with the HMIS Data and Technical Standards.

HUD recognizes that state law may affect a provider's ability to comply with the Final Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) Data and Technical Standards. As stated in Section 4 (Pg. 45928) of the Final Notice and reiterated in the Clarification and Additional Guidance on Special Provisions for Domestic Violence Provider Shelters, 69 FR 61518 (10/19/04) ("the Clarification"), organizations must also comply with federal, state and local laws that require additional confidentiality protections. HUD directed that state law would prevail in the event a conflict exists between state law and the HMIS standards "as determined by an appropriate state government entity." HUD Office of General Counsel has determined that the appropriate state government entity to make such a determination is the Attorney General of the state.

Communities should request the Attorney General of their state/commonwealth to prepare and submit to HUD a legal opinion with regard to the effect of local law. Only one opinion will be required for each state or commonwealth. The opinion must:

- 1) Cite the documents, statutes, case law, rules and regulations upon which the Attorney General relied in issuing the opinion;
- 2) Identify the specific conflict(s) between the HMIS standards and state law;
- 3) Address why the approach described in the Clarification (e.g., use of a proxy, coded, encrypted, or hashed unique identifier) does not resolve the conflict with state law;
- 4) Address why obtaining client consent does not resolve the conflict with state law;

- 5) Explain the reason underlying the conclusion that providers are prohibited from complying with HMIS standards; and
- 6) State that HUD may rely upon the opinion.

The opinion is to be addressed to the Secretary of HUD, and mailed to:

Elton J. Lester, Assistant General Counsel
Office of Assisted Housing and Community Development
451 Seventh Street, SW, Room 8158
Washington, D.C. 20410.

HUD will begin its consideration of requests to recognize that state law precludes compliance with HMIS standards only upon receipt of the Attorney General's opinion. Questions from the Offices of the Attorney General should be referred to Lynn Morgan, Senior Attorney, Office of General Counsel, Community Development Division, at 202-708-2027.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:



- HUD Releases Questions and Answers on Domestic Violence Provider Participation in HMIS.
[Click Here](http://www.hmis.info/serv_comm.asp?id=23) to read the Questions and Answers
(http://www.hmis.info/serv_comm.asp?id=23)
- **Upcoming Resources:**
 - Models of PKI Implementation
 - [Enhancing HMIS Data Quality White Paper](#)
 - [Technical Guidelines for De-identifying and Unduplicating HMIS Client Records White Paper](#)

HUD's National HMIS Team Releases Report on the SAE Process

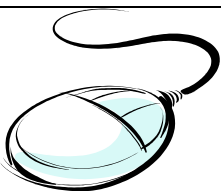
Beginning in June 2004, the National HMIS Technical Assistance team undertook a Status Assessment and Evaluation (SAE) process to identify community needs for HMIS technical assistance and to provide HUD with a baseline of information on the HMIS initiative nationwide. If you are part of an active Continuum of Care, it is likely that your community participated in an SAE and contributed to findings reported in HUD's new *Community Report: Results of the Status Assessment and Evaluation Process Conducted by the National HMIS Technical Assistance Team*.

In conducting this process across the country, the team received feedback that has assisted in the development of technical assistance products such as the national conference, the recently deployed conference call series, white papers, and the HMIS.Info portal. Additionally the team received requests from communities that were interested in comparative SAE data. These communities were primarily interested in the data to gauge their own progress in relation to other communities and to use other implementations as a resource for their own work. The result of these requests was the

development of the SAE Report. Key findings and data from the report are summarized below (based on data from SAEs conducted between June and December 2004):

- 225 implementations, encompassing 336 CoCs, were assessed;
- For the first time, more CoCs are either implementing (36%) or operating (50%) an HMIS rather than selecting software (9%), planning (3%) or have not yet begun planning (1%);
- 46% of HMIS implementations are managed by an independent non-profit or community homeless services provider;
- 96% of HMIS implementations include or plan to include data from providers of services to target populations such as mental health, substance abuse, youth, domestic violence or HIV/AIDS programs;
- Over 40% of implementations report that client data may be shared between providers according to the policies and procedures adopted by the community;
- 90% of implementations surveyed report that the HMIS serves multiple purposes, including inter-agency case management and reporting;
- Implementations have creative ways of addressing the issue of data quality, such as publication of program "report cards," development of supervisor checklists, and automated data validity processes;
- 70% of communities that provided budget information report that they rely on dedicated SHP grants to fund a portion of the HMIS project.

More information on the issues outlined above as well as other topics, including budgets and staffing, are detailed in the report. A copy of HUD's *Community Report: Results of the Status Assessment and Evaluation Process Conducted by the National HMIS Technical Assistance Team* can be found at http://www.hmis.info/ta_resources_data.asp?topic_id=2.



Don't forget to check out www.hmis.info for the latest on the National HMIS TA Initiative!

HUD Deploys Data and Technical Standards Training Nationally

The HMIS TA Team has begun deployment of a one-day Data and Technical Standards training. By September, the Team plans to conduct up to 80 regional trainings around the country, with at least one training session conducted in each state.

Training topics include:

- Participation requirements;
- Universal and program level data elements;
- Privacy and security requirements;
- Strategies for monitoring compliance; and

The training incorporates detailed information about how to make local HMIS' compliant with the final notice while simultaneously capturing the best data possible. The goal is to engage providers in discussing their progress in implementation of the final data standards, and includes take away materials and tools for local implementers. The

training is designed to be interactive, informative, and offer opportunities for peer-to-peer sharing of local strategies and successes.

Locations throughout the country have been identified based on need determined during the Status Assessment and Evaluation (SAE) Process or as requested. Training will be provided in consultation with local HUD Field Offices. Should your community wish to request Data Standards Training please consult with your local HUD field office or submit an E-Request on www.hmis.info.

Interested in Attending HMIS Data and Technical Standards Training?

Below is a list of scheduled trainings to date. Additional trainings will be scheduled throughout the summer. To register for training in your area please email datastandards@gedgroupllc.com. Include your name, CoC affiliation, phone number, and email address. Be sure to include the city name in the subject title of your email (e.g. - Data Standards Training Ventura, CA).

June 10 – Manchester, NH
June 13 – Los Angeles, CA
June 14 – Los Angeles, CA
June 15 – Ventura, CA
June 20 – Memphis, TN
June 22 – Nashville, TN
June 24 – Knoxville, TN
June 27 – Chicago, IL

July 11 – Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
July 13 – Amarillo, TX
July 15 – El Paso, TX
July 26 – North Dakota
July 27 - Albuquerque, NM
July 27 - Oklahoma City, OK
August 23 – Birmingham, AL

For updated information on Data and Technical Standards Training locations and dates, check the "Events" link on www.hmis.info. Additional dates will be posted as they are scheduled.



**Register online at www.hmisconference.info
2005 National HMIS Conference in St. Louis, MO
September 13-14, 2005**

AHAR Update # 5 Now Available!

The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) data collection period has come to a close! Beginning in May 2005, AHAR communities will prepare their data for de-duplication, produce the information for the AHAR table shells, and submit the table shells to the AHAR research team. The Abt/UPenn research team is ready to help AHAR communities take these next steps.

The AHAR Update #5 provides information about:

- The schedule for producing the AHAR table shells;
- Where to get help in producing the AHAR table shells;
- The Super Excel AHAR Table Shells; and
- How to submit your data to the research team.

The AHAR Update # 5 can be found at http://www.hmis.info/ta_resources_data.asp?topic_id=11.



Lake County, Illinois Implements an Innovative Information and Referral System Operating on Kiosks

The Department of Planning, Building and Development at Lake County, IL undertook the implementation of an innovative Information Technology project called IMPACT –to improve access to and delivery of human services for low-income residents, strengthen community planning and resource allocation, and enhance understanding of data on homelessness within the County. The project began in 2000 with a TOP (Technology Opportunity Program) grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce. Today, Lake County benefits from an integrated data infrastructure that brings together kiosk technology, Information & Referral and Case Management systems to participating agencies in the County.

The IMPACT project includes nineteen community-based non-profit, government and for-profit partners. Of these, fifteen are private or public sector human service organizations that are the IMPACT users. IMPACT consists of a variety of components that include: kiosk access to information & referral sources in both English and Spanish; kiosk access in English and Spanish to three learning modules on the following topics: home safety, immunizations and healthy pregnancy; desktop internet access to deep information and referral sources; and a Homeless Management Information System with integrated information and referral component.



Leading the implementation effort was the Lake County Department of Planning, Building and Development who partnered with BVM Olienti (BVM), a private developer of multi-media, touch screen information & referral kiosk systems. The private developer was given the charge of developing the I&R application for this community. The resulting product is called "Helping Hands Community InfoSystem". A distinguishing feature of this infrastructure is that access to information can be done directly by the client through kiosks. Currently there are a total of 9 kiosks in operation. They are located in several strategic locations

within the county. These locations include wait rooms and general areas at community health centers and at the Department of Human Services.

In its second year of operation, the IMPACT project extended the I&R system's reach by developing a provider version. This is an information & referral internet resource available to case managers and social workers that can be accessed with a personal computer at the worker's desk. The provider version extends the features available in the kiosks by allowing case workers to perform deeper and more sophisticated searches. A central part of the overall project involved the implementation of HMIS at all participating homeless provider agencies. A unique feature of this implementation included the integration of the existing I&R component with the HMIS. The private developer

undertook a comprehensive review of the existing I&R data infrastructure to make it compliant with the AIRS taxonomy and to make the integration with HMIS transparent to its users. As a result of these efforts, HMIS users benefit from the availability of I&R sources within their system. At the present time, changes to the information and referral database are propagated to the other systems on a periodic basis, but future project plans include seamless data integration among HMIS and I&R.

Lake County enjoys an integrated structure that combines a HUD compliant HMIS system with an innovative I&R application that can be used directly by clients and staff at participating agencies.

The success of the Lake County initiative can be traced to the strong partnership developed between participating agencies, the Department of Planning, Building and Development and a strong development company committed to the project. There are three distinguishing benefits evident in this implementation. These are:

- Improved access to services
- An integrated infrastructure with heterogeneous data systems
- Coordinated information and referral

Much of the implementation effort at Lake County has focused on the development of an integrated infrastructure that extends access to information and facilitates coordination among participating partners. There are however challenges that the IMPACT project has yet to resolve. This include: the need to improve efficiencies in service delivery and coordination; the need to extend usage of case management across the network of participating agencies; and the effective use of data to inform policy making.

This example helps to demonstrate that integration efforts pay-off in the long term. Today Lake County can support numerous social service information processing requirements. Examples of some of the most significant include: the ability to manage a client's service needs over time; the ability of agencies to process internal, grant or government reports; availability of information to the public for training, information and self-referral; and the ability to maintain an up-to-date directory of social services programs and agency information accessible through multiple systems and platforms.

Robert (Rob) Anthony is the IMPACT project manager. He can be reached at RAnthony@co.lake.il.us. To arrange a review of the internet version of Helping Hands e-mail mjt@bvmcom.com or call 1-888-BVM-INC1.

