

## DEPARTMENT OF AGING

1300 NATIONAL DRIVE, SUITE 200  
 SACRAMENTO, CA 95834-1992  
 Internet Home Page: [www.aging.ca.gov](http://www.aging.ca.gov)  
 TDD Only 1-800-735-2929  
 FAX Only (916) 928-2506  
 Main Office (916) 419-7543



## PROGRAM MEMO

TO: <b>Area Agencies on Aging Directors</b>	NO.: <b>PM 08-04 (P)</b>
SUBJECT: Final California Aging Reporting System Specifications for the Implementation of National Program Information System and Family Caregiver Support Program Reporting, effective July 1, 2008	DATE ISSUED: <b>February 11, 2008</b>
REVISED	EXPIRES: July 1, 2011
REFERENCES: PM 97-02 (P) and PM 08-03 (P)	SUPERSEDES N/A
PROGRAMS AFFECTED: <input type="checkbox"/> All <input type="checkbox"/> Title III-B <input type="checkbox"/> Title III-C1/C2 <input type="checkbox"/> Title III-D <input type="checkbox"/> Title III-E <input type="checkbox"/> Title V <input type="checkbox"/> CBSP <input type="checkbox"/> MSSP <input type="checkbox"/> Title VII <input type="checkbox"/> ADHC <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HICAP <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
REASON FOR PROGRAM MEMO: <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Law or Regulation <input type="checkbox"/> Response to Inquiry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Specify <u>Federal and State Changes to National Program Information System and Family Caregiver Support Program Reporting</u>	
INQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO: <a href="mailto:CARS@aging.ca.gov">CARS@aging.ca.gov</a> or Wayne R. Lindley, (916) 419-7543 or <a href="mailto:wlindley@aging.ca.gov">wlindley@aging.ca.gov</a>	

This Program Memo (PM) notifies Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) that all AAAs and their affected service providers must conform to these **Final California Aging Reporting System (CARS) Specifications** no later than **July 1, 2008**, (see attached Specifications and Instructions). The Specifications cover electronic data reporting for the National Aging Programs Information System (NAPIS), including Title III-E, the Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP). You will continue to report all other programs using the existing instructions, formats, and forms until the remaining programs are integrated in later phases of CARS implementation.

AAAs and service providers may also access these Specifications through the California Department of Aging's (CDA) web site. Go to [www.aging.ca.gov](http://www.aging.ca.gov), select "AAA" tab, select "Reporting," select California Aging Reporting System (CARS)," and open "Progress."

## Summary of CARS Project

The CARS Project is a multi-phased multi-year project which began in June 2007 and that will transform the existing Older Americans Act (OAA) and Older Californians Act (OCA) aggregate reporting system into a new web-based system capable of providing the State with client-level data from “registered” services. Phase I of CARS will use a modified off-the-shelf system configured by RTZ Associates.

The new system will allow the State to compare service utilization data across multiple OAA and OCA programs, as well as connect certain client-profile information to service utilization patterns. CARS will eventually replace the current Oracle based “ManAge” system used by CDA. However, because this first phase affects only NAPIS and FCSP, three OCA Community-Based Services Programs (CBSP) reporting electronically will continue to use the ManAge electronic reporting system and procedures through 2008-09 or until further notice. This includes Alzheimer’s Day Care Resource Centers (ADCRC), Linkages, and the Senior Companion Program (SCP).<sup>1</sup>

## Background

The federal Administration on Aging (AoA) issued instructions for implementation of the first phase of NAPIS through a Program Instruction, AoA-PI-96-01, issued October 6, 1995, and the second phase through AoA-PI-97-11, issued September 12, 1997. On February 10, 1997, CDA issued the first set of California’s specifications for electronic reporting of NAPIS data from AAAs to the State. The system CDA used was designed in an Oracle database format referred to as the ManAge system. This was later expanded to include electronic reporting for four OCA CBSP: ADCRC, Linkages, SCP, and Foster Grandparent Program (FGP). The state FGP was later dropped due to lack of funding.

In 1998, CDA and the California Association of Area Agencies on Aging (C4A) issued a joint Vision Statement for improving the California aging services network data reporting. Objective # 7 of the statement proposed a vision to “attain interdependent . . . data systems, including (with) larger (State) social and health data systems outside the aging network’s responsibility, that are useable in observing the global effect of (OAA and OCA) programs on society.” Such a dataset would be helpful in advocating for community-based services programs.

In 1999, State Senator Vasconcellos’ Bill, Senate Bill (SB) 910, was enacted. This bill addressed the need for a statewide planning process to meet the future needs of a growing aging population in California. There was concern that the State was unprepared for the coming Baby Boomers. To that end, one of the components of this legislation asked the University of California to begin looking at a “longitudinal database” on California’s aging population.

In 2003, as a direct result of the SB 910 legislation, the University of California Berkeley’s (U.C.B.) Policy Research Center published a Special Report entitled: “Planning for a

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<sup>1</sup> A fourth program, the State Foster Grandparent Program, is currently not funded by the State and does not, therefore, report to the State. There is a corresponding federal program with reporting directly to the federal government.

Comprehensive Database on Aging Californians: Meeting Public Policy and Research Needs for Better Information.”<sup>2</sup> This report critiqued CDA’s current data system and found it inadequate. The report recommended strategies to improve the system, including development of a client-level database at the state level that could be used in conjunction with other state databases, as envisioned in the 1998 Vision Statement.

CDA developed a “Common Dataset” in 2005 based on the U.C.B. Special Report’s principles for establishing a foundation for future integration of multiple state databases, instead of implementing yet another expensive new longitudinal database. All OAA and OCA programs will be incorporated in the Common Dataset in future phases of CARS development and expansion.

In 2003, CDA introduced a paper reporting system for the new FCSP reporting due to the limited timeframe for incorporating it into the ManAge electronic system. This also allowed CDA and AAAs to experiment for the first couple of years on what performance data needed to be reported. In this first phase of CARS, the FCSP reporting will transition from paper reporting to electronic reporting.

There were AoA changes to NAPIS in 2004 and 2007, including changes to the OAA during the 2006 OAA Reauthorization. CARS’ first phase will meet the new 2007 NAPIS guidelines and bring California into compliance with the latest federal requirements.

CDA’s FCSP Team released proposed changes to FCSP reporting in a November 2007 workshop at the C4A Allied Conference in Los Angeles. After incorporating suggested improvements, CDA issued PM 08-03 (P) which updates the FCSP reporting matrix, instructions, and data elements. These changes to the FCSP reporting system are incorporated in these Final CARS Specifications.

CDA issued the Initial Proposed CARS Specifications in July 2007. Using feedback collected from the AAAs through the Readiness Survey and conference calls, CDA issued a “Second Generation” of the Specifications incorporating many of the suggestions from the Initial Specifications review. The Second Generation Specifications were used for testing purposes which, in turn, have resulted in the Final CARS Specifications.

### **Response to Comments on Initial CARS Specifications**

There were seven major concerns raised by the Initial CARS Specifications. In this section, CDA responds to each of the concerns. Changes arising from these concerns are included in the Final CARS Specifications. More information is available on CDA’s CARS web site. Go to [www.aging.ca.gov](http://www.aging.ca.gov), select the “AAA” tab, select “Reporting,” select California Aging Reporting System (CARS),” and open “Progress.”

Comment 1: Do not require confidential sensitive and personal data on clients be transmitted from AAAs to the state system.

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<sup>2</sup> Special Report, Planning for a Comprehensive Database on Aging Californians: Meeting Public Policy and Research Needs for Better Information, authored by Frank W. Neuhauser, Henry E. Brady, and Jason S. Seligman, 2003.

Response to Comment 1: Originally, the reason for requiring sensitive and personal information (such as name, home address, Social Security Number, etc.) was to allow the state's system to account for duplication of clients across Planning and Service Areas without CDA having direct access to these sensitive data. Based on the recommendations of the U.C.B. Special Report, CARS will accommodate the transmission of sensitive and personal client data, but reporting these data will be optional. CDA has chosen to require the interface between AAAs and the State CARS to be built into the system; however, reporting such information will not be required under the Final CARS Specifications. CDA will not have access at any time to any client-specific data that is reported and, instead, such information will be stored in an encrypted, HIPAA-compliant database. This will be used only to automatically de-duplicate clients. AAAs are encouraged, but not required, to report these sensitive data for this purpose.

Comment 2: Replace the multiple Federal Poverty Level (FPL) variables (150%, 135%, etc.) with the original NAPIS single variable "At or Above the FPL."

Response to Comment 2: Several AAAs commented that the extra detail in multiple FPL variables would be an excessive burden to service providers. Income is a sensitive issue for clients already reluctant to provide even the basic monetary information. Even though the U.C.B. Special Report recommended the state system include exact income numbers that could then be stratified, CDA has returned to the original NAPIS standard in the Final CARS Specifications. CDA hopes that, in the future, the system could move toward meeting the U.C.B. Special Report recommendation that the state system include exact income numbers that could then be stratified. The added detailed strata will not be a requirement at this time.

Comment 3: For AAAs who want to have an "integrated" local database, keep the use of CDA's existing established Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) field values.

Response to Comment 3: CDA planned to phase CARS in for all OAA and OCA programs over time. The Initial CARS Specifications were not intended to be applied to the MSSP Program in the first phase of CARS. CARS uses federal NAPIS standards as a base and incorporates race and ethnicity standards required by state law. Also, some MSSP standards (e.g., race and ethnicity) are out-of-date with the current 2000 Census standards. However, CDA determined through discussions with AAAs that not being able to integrate CARS and MSSP in the first phase would cause problems for locally integrated databases. Therefore, CDA chose to add some field elements to CARS that are current MSSP standards to allow for an integrated system locally. Subsequently, some MSSP standards will also have to be adjusted earlier than originally scheduled. See the CARS web site for more detailed information on integration of CARS and MSSP.

Comment 4: It is not clear which programs and services must report Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL).

Response to Comment 4: The Initial Specifications were not clear about which NAPIS programs/services would have to report detailed client-specific information on ADLs and IADLs. The Specifications were revised and the Final Specifications clearly indicate that only NAPIS registered services in "Cluster 1" are required to report ADLs and IADLs. No ADL and IADL information is required for the FCSP in the Final Specifications. See Final CARS Specifications and instructions.

Comment 5: Why are there changes to the way FCSP reporting is done?

Response to Comment 5: The reasons for changes to the FCSP reporting are explained in PM 08-03 (P), issued February 11, 2008. Most of the changes had to do with aligning the state and federal reports by the five categories specified by AoA. Other changes were made to clarify what type of services is being reported.

Comment 6: The Nutritional Risk Assessment (NRA) is too complex in the Initial Specifications.

Response to Comment 6: CDA agreed and has returned to the essential NAPIS requirement of local assessments using the AoA NRA instrument and only reporting the number of people served who are at risk. No information about individual client-specific scores will be required.

Comment 7: The implementation of CARS is too aggressive and does not allow AAAs and service providers enough time to make changes to systems and to the way FCSP data is reported.

Response to Comment 7: CDA agreed and will allow for a longer transition period. The implementation date for beginning to collect data under the new CARS is **July 1, 2008**. However, AAAs that can begin implementation before July 1, 2008, are encouraged to do so.

## **Next Steps**

AAAs should begin immediately to work with the new Specifications, identifying and taking the necessary steps to meet the July 1, 2008, deadline. During the months prior to the deadline, CDA and RTZ Associates will provide technical assistance to AAAs through a series of individual conference calls and group training sessions. This assistance will familiarize AAAs with two processes: (1) submitting their data; and (2) reviewing and validating their data.

**Testing Data Submission:** AAAs not using RTZ Associates' GetCare system locally must submit client-level data according to the standardized format (see attached CARS Specifications) for testing and certification purposes. Submissions that deviate from this format will not be accepted. Accordingly, CDA strongly encourages each AAA to configure and submit test files as soon as possible. Instructions for testing will be forthcoming in a separate communication. AAAs can submit test files until June 1, 2008. AAAs that successfully submit actual and complete client-level data according to the attached specifications will be considered CARS-certified. This certification provides assurance that your AAA is prepared to submit data files to the State CARS system.

**Reviewing / Validating Data:** Submitted data files that pass automated validations will be imported into the CARS system. Once imported, sites will be able to review and adjust, as necessary, their aggregated data on online screens before final submission. Once data has been submitted in final, it will not be accessible for changes. Starting June 1, 2008, the CDA and RTZ Associates will conduct training sessions to familiarize AAAs with these screens.

During the individual AAA testing, verification, and certification process individual AAA problem solving will be on a case-by-case basis.

Please continue to send your questions or concerns via email to [CARS@aging.ca.gov](mailto:CARS@aging.ca.gov). Questions specifically concerning changes to the FCSP reporting should be sent directly to Joel Weeden, Aging Programs Specialist, at [jweeden@aging.ca.gov](mailto:jweeden@aging.ca.gov).

Information on the new CARS **fiscal** interface will be sent in another related PM.

### **Management Information System Automation**

CDA recognizes that some AAAs and service providers may need to invest in automated management information system changes to accommodate the new reporting formats. The period between this notice and the implementation of the new forms on July 1, 2008, is intended to allow time for making these changes. However, CDA will work with individual AAAs if significant issues arise that prevent their meeting this deadline. Additionally, AAAs may use One-Time-Only Title III-B funds for costs associated with changes to automated system costs and for ongoing information technology systems maintenance.

CDA appreciates AAA and service provider cooperation.



Lynn Daucher  
Director

Attachments