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PROGRAM MEMO

TO: Area Agency on Aging Directors	NO.: PM 11-03(P)
SUBJECT: CARS Guidance and Overview, Revised CARS File Specifications, and CARS Annotated Specifications	DATE ISSUED: February 25, 2011
REVISED:	EXPIRES: July 1, 2014
REFERENCES: PM 10-07	SUPERSEDES:
PROGRAMS AFFECTED: <input type="checkbox"/> All <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title III-B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title III <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title III-D <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title III-E <input type="checkbox"/> Title V <input type="checkbox"/> CBSP <input type="checkbox"/> MSSP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title VII <input type="checkbox"/> ADHC <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"/> Further guidance and revisions to reporting requirements.	
INQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO: CARS@aging.ca.gov , or Lilit Tovmasian, Data Analyst at ltovmasian@aging.ca.gov, or Mame Polito, Data Analyst at mpolito@aging.ca.gov	

This Program Memo (PM) provides further guidance to Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) about data reporting requirements in the California Aging Reporting System (CARS). CARS is a modified off-the-shelf system configured by California Department of Aging (CDA) contractor, RTZ Associates, Inc., to meet state and federal data reporting requirements.

Attached are the slightly revised CARS (CA-GetCare) File Specifications and the CARS Annotated Specifications that align with new federal reporting requirements and provide further explanation of the data elements needed to process uploaded files. Also attached is the CARS Overview and Guidance (CARS Guidance) document, which provides CARS narrative descriptions and business logic. These will help AAAs and service vendors understand and incorporate the revised CARS File Specifications into their own and their providers' database systems.

Effective July 1, 2011, AAAs and their affected service providers must adhere to the reporting requirements outlined in these documents.

CARS Guidance

AAA staff, software vendors, and/or contracted database support providers can use the details provided in the CARS Guidance to ensure local software systems adhere to CARS file specification requirements when collecting and reporting data.

This document provides:

1. An introduction to CARS.
2. A data collection/reporting overview (including an overview of the five basic data files the AAAs upload in CARS).
3. Specific technical guidance on data file requirements.
4. Business logic governing separate system modules.
5. A discussion of common data submission problems and directions for obtaining technical assistance.

The Appendices of this document illustrate the data processing and output processes for each of the five data files.

Important Highlights from the CARS Guidance

Service Unit Rounding

Beginning July 1, 2011, AAAs and their contracted service providers must track service units measured in “hours” as partial units in their local databases. When exporting data into CARS, AAAs’ local software systems must round the total service units for each client by month and by service category. This will only impact the service unit totals reported in the CARS export files, and should not affect the actual data in the AAA database. Reporting in this manner will ensure that AAAs and their service providers track actual service levels and do not round each service unit. Rounding each service unit can result in over-reporting. Currently, all but one AAA has the ability to track “partial” units. AAAs may use One Time Only (OTO) funds to make the system changes necessary to comply with these requirements. Since CARS can only accept whole numbers, CDA requires AAAs and their contracted service providers to use the rounding methodology specified in the CARS Guidance and CARS File Specifications. CDA anticipates that the discrepancies resulting from rounding in the data reported in the AAA database and in CARS will not exceed 10 percent.

For further reporting instructions, see pages 15-16 in the CARS Guidance.

Reporting Caregivers in the Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP)

Beginning July 1, 2011, AAAs and their contracted service providers must track service units and client profile information for all caregivers. Currently, some AAAs report information for “primary” caregivers only, while others report all caregivers. This new requirement may result in increased data collection and reporting for some AAAs; however, it will also ensure more accurate and consistent reporting of FCSP caregiver support. AAAs should inform their providers of this as soon as possible to ensure that they begin obtaining this information from all caregivers.

CDA does not anticipate any need for AAA system changes. AAAs and their providers can link additional caregivers to care receivers as they do normally.

If multiple caregivers care for one care receiver and receive a service from which they (i.e. both caregivers) benefit, AAAs should assign the service unit to the caregiver who initiated the service

request. For example, if a son and his wife care for an elderly parent and receive two hours of Respite Care In-Home Supervision, they both benefit from this service. However, since the son requested the service, the service unit is tied to his Participant ID. The AAA will report in his Client Profile information that he received 2 hours of Respite Care, while only the Client Profile information is reported for his wife and any other service units associated with her Participant ID. This will ensure that AAAs are not over-reporting service units or arbitrarily assigning them to multiple caregivers.

For additional information, see pages 7, 12, 13, 15, and 18 in the CARS Guidance.

Changes to CARS File Specifications (Revised 1-28-11)

The U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) recently released the revised National Aging Program Information System (NAPIS) State Program Report (SPR) to all State Units on Aging. A copy of this document is posted on the CDA website at <http://cda.ca.gov/aaa/data.asp>.

CDA modified the “Disease Prevention and Health Promotion” service category currently defined in the Service Categories and Data Dictionary (Data Dictionary) to “Health Promotion” to align with the new NAPIS SPR service category title. The revised Data Dictionary will be issued with a later PM. In addition, this category is no longer a part of NAPIS “Other” and is now considered NAPIS Service Category 16. The CARS ID value remains the same – ID 1525.

CDA also modified the unit type for “Nutrition Counseling” and “Nutrition Education” on the Lookup Table 1 tab to read “Sessions per Participant” to align with the AoA definition. Prior specifications listed the service unit type as a “Session.”

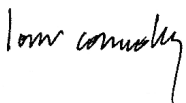
Effective July 1, 2011, AAAs are also required to report estimated total clients served in all Non-Registered Services by each service category (including “other” services). Previously, this was optional for all Non-Registered Services, except for those provided in FCSP (Title III E).

CARS Annotated Specifications (Revised 1-28-11)

The annotated specifications further explain data reporting requirements for each field and are less technical in nature. CDA updated this document to reflect the changes in the specifications that become effective July 1, 2011, i.e., CARS File Specifications (Revised 1-28-11).

All of the attached documents are posted on the CDA website under AAA Data Reporting at <http://cda.ca.gov/aaa/data.asp>.

CDA encourages each AAA to review the attached documents thoroughly. For further information please contact Lilit Tovmasian or Mame Polito whose contact information is listed in the “Inquiries” box at the top of this Program Memo. You may also send an e-mail to CARS@aging.ca.gov.



Lora Connolly
Acting Director
Attachments