# VA Initiates Participation in HMIS for VA-funded Programs
## 12/30/2010

In June of 2010 the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released a Strategic Plan that identified thirteen major initiatives, one of which is the Elimination of Veteran Homelessness. This major initiative promotes the use of robust management systems to monitor outcomes for individual Veterans as well as the outcomes of programs that serve homeless Veterans. This initiative is consistent with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Federal Strategic Plan and also coincides with HUD's Strategic Planning efforts. As a result of this federal strategic direction and coordination, VA-funded homeless assistance providers will begin participating in the local HMIS within each CoC.

CoC leadership and HMIS project staff will need to consider the following:

- The VA has released guidance to all VA-funded homeless assistance providers regarding their required participation in HMIS which is attached to this message. VA Grant and Per Diem (GPD) providers may be expected to begin HMIS participation in early 2011, but no later than March 31, 2011. Other VA-funded homeless assistance programs such as HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) will begin HMIS participation later in 2011.

- Local CoC and HMIS staff will need to coordinate with local VA officials and VA-funded providers to initiate HMIS participation.

- As with any new Contributory HMIS Organization (CHO) that enters Protected Personal Information (PPI) into an HMIS, all applicable privacy and security standards apply. It is good practice to review these standards as new CHOs come begin participating in the HMIS. In some cases local privacy and security policies may need to be amended.

- VA plans to provide webinar training to GPD providers in January of 2011. Training topics will include a general HMIS overview, HMIS participation requirements, and a review of HUD Data and Technical Standards.

- Currently all VA-funded homeless assistance programs submit client-level data to the VA. This practice of client-level data disclosure to the VA will continue as VA-funded programs participate in HMIS. HUD will provide additional information about the periodic extracts of HMIS data for persons served by VA-funded programs to be provided electronically to the VA in the coming months. **NOTE**: HUD does not expect CoCs to disclose client-level data to the VA for Veterans served in non VA-funded programs.

- HUD understands that new CHOs often have costs associated with HMIS licenses, training, technical support, data storage, system maintenance, and HMIS administration. As with the HPRP initiative, HUD expects HMIS project staff and CoC leadership to assess any HMIS participation costs associated with new users, document the allocation of those costs, and assess any participation fees in a fair and equitable manner.

HUD and VA staff will work together to provide additional training materials and TA support as the VA extends HMIS requirements to all VA-funded homeless programs.  If you have questions about HMIS participation of VA-funded programs please submit questions to the Virtual Help Desk on the HUD HRE (www.hudhre.info).  If you have specific questions about the VA's Strategic Plan please contact John Kuhn at John.Kuhn2@med.va.gov.