

SPARCS Update

New York State Department of Health

July 2014

Office of Quality and Patient Safety

General Announcements

SPARCS Public Website Refresh

The SPARCS public website has been redesigned to offer improved navigation and access to resources. The current sections include: overview, data submission, data access, forms, reports, training/support, and newsletter sections. The web address remains the same:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/sparcs/>

SPARCS Operations Guide

A SPARCS Operations Guide Version 1.0 (July 2014) has been created and is now available for download from the link above or from the training/support section of the public website.

The purpose of this guide is to describe SPARCS and its operations. It contains information on how data is acquired, processed, and accessed; and illustrates how data is added to the master files, how errors are flagged, and what data is available. In addition, the content and availability of file maintenance reports and output user files are provided, along with information on ensuring SPARCS data quality and quantity. The guide also contains detail on submitting data through the Health Commerce System, communications, and the three SPARCS data types (Identifiable, Limited, and Public Use). A Glossary of SPARCS Acronyms and Terms is also included for easy reference.

We welcome comment and feedback on this guide. SPARCS Operations has made every effort to provide accurate and complete information in the guide. Any typographical error is unintentional on our part and we urge users of this guide to bring them to our attention for correction. Edits, deletions, modifications, or changes to areas of this guide will be maintained in a change log and updated versions of the guide will be released.

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Compliance and Quality Improvement

2013 SPARCS Annual Reconciliation

The 2013 SPARCS Annual Reconciliation process is drawing to a close. All SPARCS data for 2013 was required to be submitted by June 30, 2013, unless a healthcare facility made arrangements by requesting an extension or exception. Exceptions are granted in the situation where the number of patient visits or stays are less than the expected number, based upon the previous year's submissions. An extension is granted for a month. The current extension ends July 31, 2014. SPARCS allows for two, one-month extensions issued sequentially. The final extension ends August 31, 2014 and must be requested before the end of July. Confirmation of the new due date will be sent to the healthcare facilities. Facilities that have not submitted their data by the due date will be issued a Statement of Deficiency (SOD).

Monthly Reminders

Ninety-five percent of your SPARCS data is required to be submitted to SPARCS sixty days after the end of the month of the visit or stay. SPARCS continues to send monthly reminders to facilities that failed to submit their SPARCS data by the first Tuesday of the month. This month's reminder is for SPARCS data for visits and stays that ended in the month of April and were due by July 1, 2014. The receipt of this data is found on both in the July 2, 2014 audit report and the June 2014 compliance report.

Quarterly Compliance

On July 18, 2014, SPARCS Operations sent all SPARCS coordinators, backup coordinators, and administrators a notification of a change to the SPARCS compliance process. As a result of SPARCS' new regulation NYCRR Title 10 Section 400.18, SPARCS announced that the compliance process would change from the annual reconciliation process to quarterly compliance. This means that 100% of SPARCS data for the visits or discharges that occurred in the months of January, February, and March 2014 (the first quarter of 2014) are due September 30, 2014. To allow healthcare facilities to adjust to the new protocol, SPARCS will issue no Statements of Deficiency until the end of the second quarter reconciliation period (December 31, 2014). Full text of the letter and the reporting schedule may be found on the SPARCS public webpage under Announcement Letters website or at the following direct link:
http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/sparcs/x12-837/announcement_letters.htm.

Data Collection, Storage, and Release

SPARCS Data Release: Limited and Identifiable

Applications to obtain limited or identifiable SPARCS data should be submitted to dprb@health.state.ny.us. Requests for SPARCS data (approved application required) should be submitted to sparcs@health.state.ny.us.

The following organizations received SPARCS data files in June 2014.

Organization	Data File Type	Years
Hospital for Special Surgery	Identifiable	1995—2012
iVantage Health Analytics	Limited	2013—2014
New York University Hospital for Joint Diseases	Limited	2000, 2010
SG-2, LLC	Limited	2010—2012
SUNY School of Public Health	Identifiable	2011

The complete list of approved identifiable data requests is maintained on the Department’s website: http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/sparcs/dprb/approved_data_req.htm

Submitter Notes

Transitional Care Units

SPARCS has received several inquiries about the reporting of SPARCS data for patients in Transitional Care Units (TCU). Transitional Care Units are sub-acute inpatient care. SPARCS will not require health care facilities to submit this data.

We welcome comments and feedback.

SPARCS Operations

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SPARCS Update newsletters are distributed electronically to individuals with Health Commerce System (HCS) data upload access, subscribers to SPARCS-L, and other interested parties upon request.

Updates are available online at:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/sparcs/info.htm>