Specific Sources of Information

Office of Inspector General
Office of Evaluation and Inspections

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Introduction

As we have seen in Technical Assistance Guide #2: Targeting the Information Needed, specific information sources need to be identified once the types of information sources have been decided upon. This guide identifies a variety of specific information sources in the Office of Evaluation and Inspections (OEI), moves to the Office of Inspector General (OIG), then to the Staff Divisions and the Operating Divisions in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), other government sources outside of HHS, and finally to non-government sources.

This guide is intended to be updated periodically. Thus, any useful sources that might be added should be communicated to the Chairperson of the Procedures Committee.

Sources Available Within OEI

There exists a wealth of information sources right in our own backyard, that is, within OEI itself. Many of these sources may be overlooked or underutilized. Hopefully this guide will serve as an impetus for the increased utilization of information sources within our own office.

1. ***Source: Data and information sources available to OEI personnel (Transmitted to Regions and Branches 10/28/86)***
   - compendium of most frequently needed information sources categorized by Program Inspections Division (SSB, HCB, PHHSB).
   - lists and describes content of various SSB, HCB, and PHHSB computer data systems, files, and records, and tells where to find them.
2. ***Source: OEI from the beginning***
   - discusses findings and resultant recommendations of past inspections (4/1/85-9/30/87).
   - discusses computer application and data bases (pp. 43-47).
   - lists publications and tells where to get them.
3. ***Source: OEI's mathematical statistician (Wm. Mark Krushat: FTS 646-3145)***
   - ask him what type of information you are looking for and he will access it for you (to reduce duplication of requests from OEI personnel to information sources).
4. ***Source: Notes of important, relevant information from conferences attended by OEI personnel***
   - the proceedings of the fifth annual meeting (June 1988) of the Association for Health Services Research (AHSR) and Foundation for Health Services Research (FHSR).
5. ***Source: Other OEI personnel who have been involved in similar inspections***
   - reports from other regions.
   - sources other OEI personnel used in related inspections.
   - previous work plans for inspections.
6. ***Source: Headquarters program specialists and branch chiefs***
   - provide pertinent people to contact.
   - elucidate relevant written sources of information.
7. ***Source: Technical Report: Medicare Part B Sample File (BMAD—IV Subset)***
   - baseline information about Medicare Supplemental Medical Insurance (SMI) utilization and expenditures.
   - describes the file and some applications.
   - series of tables which describe Medicare Part B utilization.

Sources Available in OIG

8. ***Source: Data-Based Resources—2/14/84 (available from OEI Region V)***
   - compendium of pre-published material describing information sources both inside and outside HHS such as:

   HHS Resources

   "Status Report"
   Internal Program Information
   Studies and Reports
   Existing Data Sets

   Non-HHS Resources

   NTIS—National Technical Information Service (Department of Commerce)
   GAO—General Accounting Office
   Computerized Search Services
   HHS Experts

9. ***Source: OAS audit reports and OI investigation reports***
   - contact persons:
     OAS—Andrea Walker FTS 269-3066
     OI—Ila Shaw FTS 269-2548

10. ***Source: OIG Semi-Annual Reports to the Congress***
    - summarizes OIG's major activities, initiatives, results, findings, and recommendations to improve quality of care, enhance program management, and achieve cost savings made during the immediately preceding 6 month period.

11. ***Source: Office of Management and Policy—Office of Legislation, Regulations and Public Affairs***
    - provides information on current and proposed legislation as well as on regulatory issues.

12. ***Source: OIG User Information Center (UIC) (FTS 269-2343)***
    - provides OIG end users with advice and help in applying information gathering techniques.
    - services available by telephone are primarily answering software and hardware problem diagnosis, and referral to other persons or entities for assistance.
    - maintains library of books and software available for lending.

13. ***Source: OAS and OI workplans***
    - provide detailed information on planned activities and special initiatives of OAS and OI.

Sources Available in the Other Staff Divisions

Sources Available in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)

14. Source: ASPE Policy Information Center (PIC) (202-619-6445)

- centralized repository of evaluative research relevant to HHS programs and policies.
- publishes quarterly memorandum which describes:
  - *the services available from PIC.*
  - *recent publications available for PIC such as HHS studies/reports, reports from the Office of Technology Assessment or the Congressional Budget Office, and reports from the General Accounting Office.*
- publishes Compendium of HHS Evaluations and Relevant Other Studies.
  - *centralized source of information on ongoing and completed HHS evaluation, research, OIG program inspections, and audits.*
- provides an online query system—specialized searches of data base (updated daily).

15. Source: ASPE staff

- legislative and policy analysis expertise on all major subject matters in the Department.

Sources Available in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget (ASMB)

16. Source: ASMB Budget Division staff

- budget resources by subject matter.
- contacts with specific people responsible for budgets of the specific operating divisions.

17. Source: Office of Computer and Information Systems (OCIS)

- Application Systems Reference Manual.
  - *initial point of reference for information about HHS information systems.*
  - *can identify systems by:*
    description
    organizational location
    function
    budget authority
    GAO accession number
    OMB report number

Sources Available Jointly From the Assistant Secretary for Health and the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

18. Source: HHS data inventory

- reference document and guide to ongoing and planned data projects and systems within HHS as well as to major analytic databases of widespread current interest or utility.
- guide to the location of and access to data from the various data resources of HHS.
- serves as data base in support of respective data policy oversight and evaluation responsibilities of ASPE and the Assistant Secretary for Health.
- contains brief introductions, summary and analysis of inventory results, and detailed inventory of data projects, systems, and analytic data bases of HHS.
- contains brief description of each project or system, the purpose of the system, the status of data collection and analysis, an indication of the forms in which data are available, and the name of the contact person.

Sources Available From the Executive Secretariat

19. Source: Office of the Secretary (OS), Executive Secretariat staff

- can provide information broken down by major program areas.

Sources Available From the General Counsel

20. Source: Office of General Counsel staff

- court cases relevant to inspections.
- interpretations of legislation and regulations.

Sources Available in the Operating Divisions

Sources Available in the Public Health Service

21. ***Source: National Library of Medicine (NLM)***
    - major repository for medical journals.
    - the nation's chief medical information source.
22. ***Source: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health Information Policy Council's (HIPC) Data Sources Inventory***
    - information concerning health data collection activities within HHS to coordinate data collection.
    - complies abstracts of all data collections systems.
23. ***Source: Health Information Center, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion***
    - identifies health information resources.
    - channels requests for information to these resources.
    - publications on health related topics of widespread interest.
24. ***Source: Office of Minority Health***
    - information on activities pertaining to the health and well-being of minority groups.
25. ***Source: Catalog of Publications of the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)***
    - listing of center reports from 1980 through 1987 (publications issued by NCHS prior to 1980 are listed in the Catalog of Publications of the National Center for Health Statistics 1962-1979).
    - listing of articles by NCHS staff appearing in professional and scientific publications.
      - *index to selected health topics covered in NCHS reports, includes topics and variables related to the health status of the population and covers the characteristics of health facilities and occupation.*

Sources Available in the Social Security Administration (SSA)

26. ***Source: Social Security Bulletin***
    - monthly publication of SSA information.
27. ***Source: Program Operations Manual System (POMS)***
    - SSA program operations manual.
28. ***Source: Oasis***
    - monthly publication for the employees of SSA.
29. ***Source: SSA Annual Report to the Congress***
    - gives name of report, description/frequency of report, and where to get the report.
    - section on SSA publication and periodicals of interest to the Congress.

Sources Available in the Health Care Financing Administration

30. ***Source: Health Care Financing review article entitled: "The Potential Use of HCFA Data Sets for Health Care Services Research." Health Care Financing Review, Fall 1983, Vol. 5, number 1, pp. 93-98***
    - introduces reader to HCFA data.
    - describes most important data bases that are useful in research and their strengths and weaknesses.
    - states the extent to which they are available to outside users.
31. ***Source: HCFA's Bureau of Data Management and Strategy—Data Profiles Manual***
    - initial reference point for potential users seeking data or information regarding HCFA's programmatic areas of responsibility.
    - broad orientation to types of data available and provides basis for dialogue between those needing information and those with an in-depth knowledge of HCFA's data.
    - standard profile for each data record included and defines the contents of each.
32. ***Source: HCFA's Health Care Financing Program Statistics Medicare and Medicaid Data Book***
    - basic data and analysis of the Medicare and Medicaid program.
    - trends on enrollees, recipients, use of services and expenditures, and describes various aspects of the program.
    - lists of Medicare carriers and intermediaries, Medicaid agencies, fiscal agents, and agency offices to call for information.
33. ***Source: HCFA Model 204 Database and Query System***
    - provides access to the MEDPAR file and the End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) system.
    - MEDPAR files contain summary records of all Medicare hospital discharges; beneficiary is identified by HICN, not by name.
    - ESRD system contains files on entitlement, utilization, and medical history data for all ESRD beneficiaries; also contains information on all ESRD providers.
34. ***Source: Medicare Publications and Tabulations List Available From HCFA/BDMS/SISB—(301) 594-6705***
    - Health Care Spending Bulletins
    - Health Care Financing Review
    - HCFA Background Paper
    - Annual Medicare Program Statistics
    - HCFA Budget Briefing Book
    - HCFA Statistics

35. Source: HCFA's Office of Research and Demonstrations—Current Publications Listing

- synopsis and ordering information on available publications produced by HCFA.
- publications include results and findings from research and demonstration projects and statistics on the Medicare and Medicaid programs.
- provides medical library services and computer based reference service to public and private agencies and organizations.

Sources Available in Government Outside HHS

36. ***Source: President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency (PCIE)***
    - mailing lists of key contact people within each OIG.

37. ***Source: Office of Management and Budget (OMB)***
    - yellow book of contact people for specific areas of responsibility and expertise within all Federal government agencies.
    - name and contact information for OMB analysts.
    - the Budget of the U.S. Government (management report).

38. ***Source: Congress***
    - committee/conference reports
    - Congressional Record
    - Library of Congress

39. ***Source: Congressional Budget Office (CBO)***
    - studies major health insurance budget issues, especially Medicaid and Medicare.
    - budget related information and analysis of alternative fiscal policies.

40. ***Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS)***
    - primarily a source of general reference for members of Congress and Congressional committees.
    - executive branch agencies can, however, order specific reports by report name and number.
    - does not provide wholesale information on a certain topic, only specific reports by name or number.
    - not a general research service for entities other than Congress.
    - Education and Public Welfare Division deals with health issues including Medicare, Medicaid, and Maternal and Child health programs.

41. ***Source: Office of Technology Assessment (OTA)***
    - studies on effects of new or changing technology on people's lives.
    - addresses health care issues including health care technologies, cost and quality of health care, and forecasting of physician supply.

42. ***Source: General Accounting Office (GAO)***
    - reports on Federal Government programs including those administered by HHS.

43. ***Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census***
    - data on demographic and social statistics in such areas as families and households, marital status and living arrangements, income and participation in assistance programs, labor force, fertility, child care, race and ethnic statistics, and educational attainment.

44. ***Source: National Governors' Association Center for Policy Research—Health Policy Studies***
    - reports on health issues including maternal and child health, Medicaid and State health care cost containment.
    - provides technical assistance on health issues.

45. ***Source: State Medicaid Directors Association—HCFA Regional Office***

46. ***Source: U.S. Conference of Local Health Officers***
    - information on national health developments.
    - health policy proposals.

47. ***Source: Commissions/task forces, e.g., the National Commission for the Prevention of Infant Mortality***
    - reports of findings and recommendations.
    - names, addresses, phone numbers, and descriptions of entities concerned with issues affecting maternal and child health.

48. ***Source: Federal Information Sources and Systems***
    - directory issued by Comptroller General.
    - inventory of sources and information systems containing fiscal, budgetary and program related information. Within the inventory, there are brief descriptions of the *information sources* from where the information was obtained.
    - identifies and describes *information systems,* containing budgetary, fiscal, social, economic, scientific, technical, and/or program related data.
    - includes abstracts containing information on the purpose, data content, inputs and outputs, relevant budget program information, authorizing legislation, congressional committee jurisdictions and geographic relevance.

49. ***Source: Government Printing Office (GPO) Subscription Service Bulletin***
    - Lists manual title/publication number, GPO list ID, and subscription title S/N of manuals available through GPO.

Sources Available From Non-Government Entities

50. Source: American Public Welfare Association's (APWA) American Public Welfare Directory

- directory of State public welfare officials, phone numbers and addresses.

51. Source: Congressional Quarterly's Washington Information Directory

- names, addresses, phone numbers and description of various governmental entities.

52. Source: NEXIS

- computer search service.
- full-text library of general and business news and information.
- newspapers magazines, wire services, newsletters, searchers.

53. Source: LEXIS

- legal research service.
- Congressional Record, Federal Register, Code of Federal Regulations, Public Contracts Cases, Presidential Documents File Searchers.

54. Source: ECLIPSE (of LEXIS)

- electronic clipping service.
- automatically searches through all added or amended portions of the Congressional Record.

55. Source: LEGI-SLATE

- on-line service for information about the U.S. Congress including legislative searches, legislative history, and committee schedules.

56. Source: Commerce Clearing House (CCH)

- summaries and analysis of every major piece of legislation.

57. Source: Hospitals

- cost
- annual reports
- financial statements

58. Source: American Hospital Association (AHA)

- publications
- auxiliary societies
- membership lists
- credentialing information
- directory of facilities
- annual hospital survey data

59. Source: American Medical Association (AMA)

- publications, e.g. Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)
- membership information
- doctor profiles
- medical school accreditation

60. ***Source: Association for Health Services Research/Foundation for Health Services Research (AHSR/FHSR) Published Directory of Health Services Research Organizations***
    - information on more than 80 public and private research centers.

61. ***Source: Colleges and universities***
    - centers for academic study of particular issues or policies, e.g. National Institute of Poverty.
    - major public policy study groups.
    - professors' publications and expertise.

62. ***Source: Public and university libraries***
    - especially those that are repositories for Federal documents.

63. ***Source: Newspaper/magazine/journal articles***

64. ***Source: Advocacy groups and their publications, e.g., American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)***
    - issue papers
    - lists of publications
    - long-term care information

65. ***Source: Foundations***
    - Ford
    - Rockefeller
    - Kaiser
    - Robert Wood Johnson (major health care foundation)

66. ***Source: Think tanks***
    - Interstudy—HMO's, prepaid health care.
    - Urban Institute
    - Heritage Foundation
    - Brookings Institution
    - Urban System Research and Engineering, Inc.

67. ***Source: Health Affairs (publication)***
    - data watch section
      - *reports on new developments in four sectors of the health sphere:*
        Summer—health care innovation
        Fall—national health care spending
        Winter—health personnel
        Spring—health status and health care utilization
      - *each data watch report is followed by an extensive bibliography.*

68. ***Source: Project SHARE***
    - national clearinghouse for improving the management of human services.

69. Source: DIALOG

- world's largest and most comprehensive computer storehouse of information.
- 60 million references.
- access through personal computer with modem.
- over 150 databases covering all major disciplinaries, e.g. medicine, public affairs.
- descriptions of published articles.
- directory type information on associations, etc. giving officers, addresses, etc.
- statistical time series from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- information forms:
  Commerce Business Daily
  Congressional Record
  Electronic Yellow Pages
  Federal Register
  NCJRS

70. Source: American Public Health Association (APHA)

- all aspects of health care.
- standards for scientific procedure in the public health field.

71. Source: The Allan Guttmacher Institute

- research and policy analysis in fields of national and international reproductive health fertility regulation, population, and other related areas of health and social policy.

72. Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

- public policy research group that analyzes allocations for social programs in the Federal budget and studies effects of reductions in the Federal budget for social programs on low-income families.

73. Source: Children's Defense Fund

- gathers data and disseminates information on key issues affecting children, including development and implementation of Federal and State policies.

74. Source: Food Research and Action Center

- a non-partisan center seeking lasting solutions to hunger, malnutrition, and poverty in America.

75. Source: Institute of Medicine

- policies pertaining to the health of the public.
- identifies issues of medical care, research, and education.

76. Source: National Health Law Program

- organization of lawyers and health professionals representing the economically disadvantaged and the elderly in issues concerning Federal, State, and local health care programs.

77. ***Source: National Health Policy Forum***
- organization of health policy professionals that promotes a better understanding of health delivery practices.
- provides health policy research information services.

78. ***Source: National Rural Health Association***
- acts as local agency in improving the health and health care of people in rural communities through education, communications, research, and advocacy.

79. ***Source: Washington Business Group on Health***
- represents major employers in the formulation of Federal and State health policy.
- participates in discussions, hearings, and other aspects of legislation and regulation.
- resource of information and expertise on health care issues.

80. ***Source: Intergovernmental Health Policy Project***
- publishes periodic newsletter entitled, "State Health Notes," which includes information on State laws and initiatives. Particularly good source for Medicaid information.

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