

Visual Confidential Morbidity Report (Visual CMR or VCMR)

VCMR is an electronic reporting system for communicable diseases. Its main purpose is to make disease reporting, investigation, and tracking more efficient for Disease Control Programs in Los Angeles County. VCMR manages the investigative cycle of a disease or outbreak from date of onset to the final resolution.

Under the California Code of Regulations, medical care providers, health facilities, laboratories, educators, and others are required to report incidents of specific diseases or conditions to their local health department. Within Los Angeles County (LAC) Department of Health Services (DHS), the lead unit for the surveillance and investigation of most communicable disease (CD) cases and outbreaks is the Acute Communicable Disease Control (ACDC) unit. ACDC oversees the epidemiology and control of all reportable diseases except AIDS, STD and TB, sets policy for field staff, and provides guidance to the medical community.

ACDC contracted with a private software company, Atlas Development, to design custom software to replace the old CD reporting system. VCMR operates on a shared server via the DHS wide area network and utilizes the capabilities of InterSystems Cach[®] database technology. Navigation of VCMR mirrors the operational procedures used in most Windows[®]-based visual programs. There are three security levels: System Administrator, central program staff (ACDC, Morbidity Unit, Immunization Program, Food & Milk Unit), and district staff (Epidemiologists, PHN, Medical Directors, District Registrars)

SPECIAL FEATURES INCLUDE:

- Graphical User Interface (GUI)
- Centralized receipt of all incoming reports (fax, telephone, and soon Internet)
- Ability to export data to SAS, Excel, Access, and other analytical software
- Automation of routine data functions, such as Soundex names matching, census tracking, and duplicate checking
- Coordination of disease reports with foodborne illness reports and outbreaks in a single database.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

- Increase in CMR reports by simplifying the reporting process
- Better quality control leading to more accurate data
- More rapid response at each level of investigation and review

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

- Ad hoc reports using Crystal Reports
- Auditing: every change can be tracked by time and person
- Foodborne Illness Report can be linked to CMR cases and outbreaks
- Process Status: indicates the investigation stage of the case and which PHN is responsible
- Standard Reports: by district, disease, investigation status, and time of onset or report
- System Message: method to alert all users regarding new system functionality

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- Web-based reporting of disease cases from medical providers
- Web-based reporting of foodborne illness complaints from the public
- Electronic reporting from laboratory information systems