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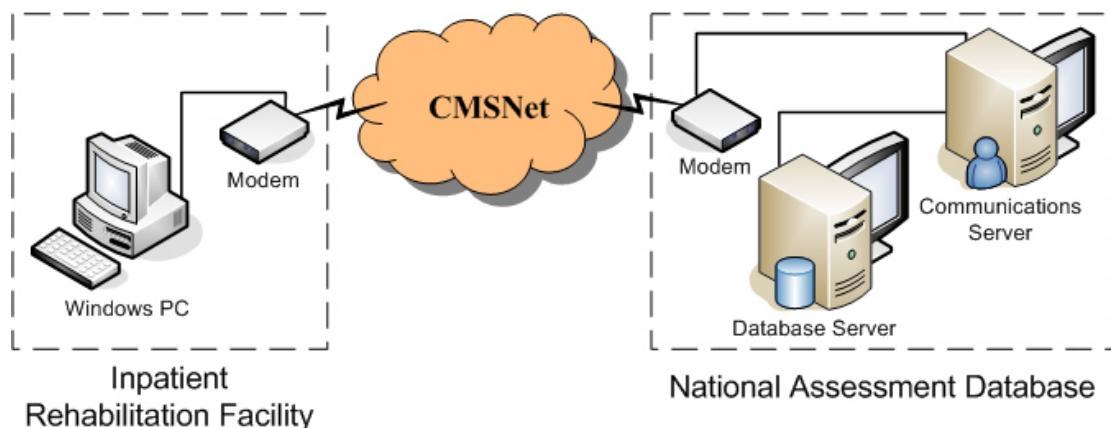
INTRODUCING THE IRF-PAI SYSTEM

The IRF-PAI System is part of the overall National Automation Project. The purpose of this project is to provide computerized storage, access, and analysis of the IRF-PAI data on patients in facilities across the United States. The IRF-PAI System is intended to create a standard, nationwide system for connecting facilities to the National Assessment Collection Database (NACD) for the purpose of electronic interchange of data, reports, and other information. The IRF-PAI System provides the following functions:

- Receipt of IRF-PAI records from facilities to the NACD.
- Authentication and validation of IRF-PAI records received from facilities.
- Feedback to facilities indicating acknowledgment of the transmission of the data and specifying the status of record validation.
- Storage of IRF-PAI records in the NACD.

The system was designed to also serve as a means of communicating information (e.g., reports, documents, and notices) with facilities. Figure 2-1 provides an overview of the IRF-PAI System architecture and illustrates the communication components and database repository. Figure 2-1 also serves to illustrate the flow of IRF-PAI data submissions.

Figure 2-1. Overview of the IRF-PAI System Architecture



At each facility, the user will utilize the IRF-PAI System to electronically send IRF-PAI data records to the National Assessment Collection Database. These data records are transmitted via a modem where the file is validated to ensure that the basic elements conform to the requirements (such as proper format and facility information). This validation is performed while the facility remains on-line. If the submission passes the initial validation check, then

each record is checked for errors or exceptions to the data specifications and a Final Validation Report is generated. Section 3 describes both the Initial Feedback and Final Validation Report, as well as, how to interpret the various fields in both.

WHAT HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE IS REQUIRED

Table 2-1 below details the minimum hardware and software configurations required to transmit IRF-PAI records to the NACD using the IRF-PAI system. You should be able to obtain any of the required hardware and software, or information on how to order it, from most computer stores.

Note: Your facility must be using software capable of encoding IRF-PAI records and exporting data files in accordance with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) standard record layout specifications for the current version of the IRF-PAI.

Table 2-1. Hardware/Software Requirements

Processor:	Pentium Class (1.2 GHz)
Memory (RAM):	1 GB
Operating System:	Windows Vista (32 bit) or XP (32 bit) current with all security patches
Hard Drive:	1 GB free space
Browser:	Internet Explorer v7.0 or 8.0

Should you have difficulty in verifying your existing system hardware and software configuration, contact your facility computer support personnel, the specific hardware and software vendors, or the vendor who has provided you with IRF-PAI data encoding software, as appropriate.

Note: At facilities where a computer network is in use, the installation and setup of the IRF-PAI System should be coordinated with the assistance of a network administrator and appropriate vendors, as needed.

Note: Having a single telephone line exclusively dedicated to the IRF-PAI System is a safeguard against interruptions or breaks in your connection to the national server.

WHAT TRAINING IS RECOMMENDED

Whether formal or informal, training in the software applications associated with the IRF-PAI System would be helpful. It is recommended that you also obtain Windows training. Training in these applications can usually be obtained from the software vendor, a local computer store, college or university, or from your IRF-PAI software vendor. A basic level of familiarity with these software applications, in addition to the operation of your PC will greatly facilitate the use of the IRF-PAI System.

Note: You should receive training from your IRF-PAI encoding software vendors in performing data extracts and preparing files for submission prior to using the IRF-PAI System. This will help to ensure that your submissions are in the correct format, contain the correct information, and will be accepted into the IRF-PAI system.

In instances where software manuals or guides are not available, you may check with your local computer store for recommended reference guides. All Browsers and Windows Applications have online help available to assist you.