

STARSFlash

Noteworthy Information for STARS® Users and System Administrators

Issue: 2003-5
December 2, 2003

2003 STARS User Conference



STARS User Conference attendees heading to the ballgame after a long day of sessions.

The 2003 STARS User Conference, held at the Wyndham Hotel in Baltimore on September 8-9, gathered rave reviews. Among the participants were 70 STARS users from 26 organizations, including both government contractors and private companies

Over the two-day period, the participants (system administrators, users, DBAs, and management) attended 18 sessions designed to build their knowledge and experience.

Members of the ViPS staff prepared presentations and were available to provide information and answer questions.

During the Scenario Sharing sessions, STARS users shared their own experiences. These covered topics such as: fraud scenarios; using summary analysis and subsets in corporate and financial investigations; and using STARS to identify duplicate payments. Everyone agreed that much was learned.

The presentations from the conference have been posted on ViPSAssist. They can be found in the 'News' section in three separate postings – Parts 1, 2 & 3.

The conference wasn't all work. Participants enjoyed good food and conversation at the reception on Monday evening. The group pictured at the top of this page also attended a baseball game with Brian Zonis and cheered the Orioles to a win over the Boston Red Sox.

During the conference, attendees submitted answers to trivia questions about the sessions to qualify for a prize drawing. At the closing session the winner was drawn. Karen Vecchioli, from CareFirst, was the recipient of a Toshiba Pocket PC.

The next STARS user conference will be held in 2005. ★

To be found in this issue:

- STARS 2003 User Conference
- Version 5.2 Notes
- Version 5.0 Performance Alert
- Do You Know How To...?
- What's New on ViPSAssist
- Helping StarCare help you
- Announcement: Online Training Session in December

Coming:

- More training opportunities
- Using Ratios – a series from Brian Zonis
- Put a face on STARCare

STARCare

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Version 5.2 Notes

A New View on the Horizon

How STARS 5.2 SP1 Uses Views to Increase Functionality

Imagine leaving technology behind and heading out to hike on the Appalachian Trail. As you begin your adventure, you turn back to see the *view* of where you started – your isolated campsite by a gurgling stream. You proceed up the path (all the while thinking of intricate fraud schemes and how to use STARS to detect them, no doubt!) and pause after a while to turn, once again, and look back at where you've come from. What greets you is a new, majestic *view* of the valley below! You can still focus on your campsite and the stream, but how the *view* has changed! You can see more of the countryside...a raging river fed by the small stream at your campsite; rolling foothills of colorful fall foliage, a nearby village (your campsite was not as isolated as it may have originally appeared!)....

STARS database views do not affect access to your existing invoice types, but rather enable you to see and use your data from a different perspective

The soon-to-be-released service pack for STARS 5.2 delivers the exciting capability of custom database *views* to your claims data so that you can see and work with it in new and different ways. Like the views on the trail, STARS database views do not affect access to your existing invoice types, but rather enable you to see and use your data from a different perspective possibly combining similar lines of business, or segregating a single data feed into multiple slices.

For example, if your STARS database is defined with an invoice type for professional HMO claims and another for professional PPO claims, current system functionality supports analysis against each individually or against a user-created multi-level subset of the two. If you want a summary (SAR or ratio) report of provider services across your entire professional book of business, you would need to export and combine the individual results using another tool (i.e. Access, Excel, etc.).

With a view, however, you can combine the data from both invoice types into one new invoice type, and automatically generate Summaries, SARs and Ratios, representing all professional provider services! This new capability is not limited to the cyclical reports: these views will be available as a data source in the STARS GUI and appear to the end user as new invoice types that can be queried or used to create subsets with all of the associated subset functionality available (i.e. random sampling, subset summaries, patterns, etc.)!

And the best part – views alone require NO additional disk space! Subsets created by users excited by the new views and new summaries, however, will need some additional disk space.

Implementing views for your site will require a minimal amount of work on the part of VIPS, your System Administrator and your Lead Functional User to define the components of the view and set up the control table, labels, etc.

STARS 5.2 SP1 is planned for release in early 2004. ★

STARS 5.0 Performance Alerts

As reported in an earlier version of the **STARSFlash** (v3, 7/15/2003), customers who routinely run queries that return large quantities of data are experiencing severe performance issues with STARS 5.0.

VIPS' analysis into this issue revealed that PowerBuilder 7.0, used in the coding of the STARS 5.0 GUI, does not manage workstation memory efficiently. In fact, it uses a factor of seven times what PowerBuilder 8.0 uses to process the same amount of data, thus increasing the run time of the query. PowerBuilder 7.0 also does not provide end users with the 'low on memory' warnings given in prior versions of STARS. Instead, the application returns a 'smart heap' error and crashes.

Our latest STARS release, 5.2, was written using PowerBuilder 8.0, thereby eliminating the performance problem. While those customer sites affected by this problem may be able to work around it by limiting the size of their expected result sets, the definitive solution is to upgrade to STARS 5.2.

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What's new on ViPSAssist

ViPSAssist is your source for the latest news on STARS. Please visit www.vipsassist.com regularly to see the latest news about STARS. Some recent items include:

News

- STARS Oracle Subset Space Reclamation Recommendations
- Presentations from User Conference
- VMS changes & the effect on the STARS Extracts
- Information on the renewal of Open Server for STARS 5.0 clients
- Updates to 5.2 PreMigration Checklist
- V5.2 System Performance Enhancements

Known issues about Oracle & 5.2

- When pasting data, be sure to save it as rich text, not in Word format
- 2000 character limit (slated to be fixed in SP1)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- How do I customize case reports?
- How do I find orphaned subsets?

In addition to these items, you will find complete manuals and a software center that has release information and FTP download access. ViPS Assist also provides a location where you can start discussions on STARS-related topics. ★

STARS 5.0 Performance Alerts, continued

For our Sybase customers on a SUN platform, upgrading to STARS 5.2 may pose an extra hurdle that they had not planned for and cannot immediately accommodate.

STARS 5.2 is certified on Sybase v12.5, which requires a minimum UNIX OS of Solaris 2.8. Upgrading to STARS 5.2 may therefore require the added step of upgrading your OS. To assist the sites that cannot readily complete an OS upgrade, ViPS regression tested* the STARS 5.2 GUI on Sybase 12.0 and found no issues. As a result, Sybase/Solaris customers have the option of upgrading to STARS 5.2 while remaining on Sybase 12.0 as an interim solution until they can upgrade their UNIX OS.

If you would like more information on how to upgrade to STARS 5.2 on Sybase 12.0, please call or e-mail your STARCare representative.

* **Note** - the regression test was not as vigorous as the normal release QA testing, but does provide us with a level of comfort that major functionality is operating as intended. One customer is currently running successfully in this configuration. ★

Helping STARCare Help You

It can be frustrating when you have a problem or question holding up your progress. Sometimes it takes longer than you would hope to get it resolved. We at ViPS want to make sure that you get the best service that we can give you. Here are some guidelines to use when contacting STARCare that should help your issues get resolved as quickly as possible.

1. Identify which of our Customer sites you are calling or e-mailing from.
2. Give us as much detail as you can about your issue:
 - What were you trying to do?
 - What were the exact steps leading up to the issue?
 - What did you expect to happen?
 - What, exactly, did you see (send us screenshots if at all possible)?
3. Do a little research on your end:
 - *System Administrators/DBAs*: If this is an issue with your load, take a look at the logs to see if you can identify anomalies or obvious errors
 - *System Administrators*: If a user's error refers to a log file (subset errors, most commonly), please examine the log for that job before contacting STARCare.
 - *STARS Users*: Can you find out if other users are having your problem as well?
4. Let us know the priority of your problem or issue. If it is keeping you from moving on in your job, tell us.
5. If you have a problem that needs attention after hours, be sure to use the STARCare phone line.
 - Leave a detailed message about your issue
 - Speak slowly when leaving a phone number where you can be reached.
 - The STARCare representative on call is beeped and will get back to you as quickly as he or she can.

Lastly, we want your feedback. Please let us know if we're doing a good job or if you have suggestions about how we can improve our service to you. ★

Did You Know ? -

By Lori Blander

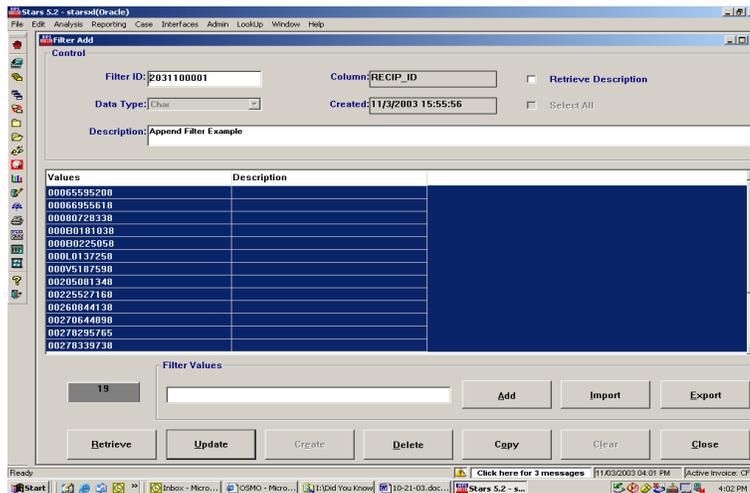
Did you know that you can append entries from a current report to a filter that was previously created?

This can be very useful when you want to create a filter that combines results from multiple queries. For example, for a disease management project you want to query both inpatient facility claims and outpatient claims to identify patients with a specific condition. You want to keep the complete list of identified patient IDs in a filter so that you can use it various times during the year.

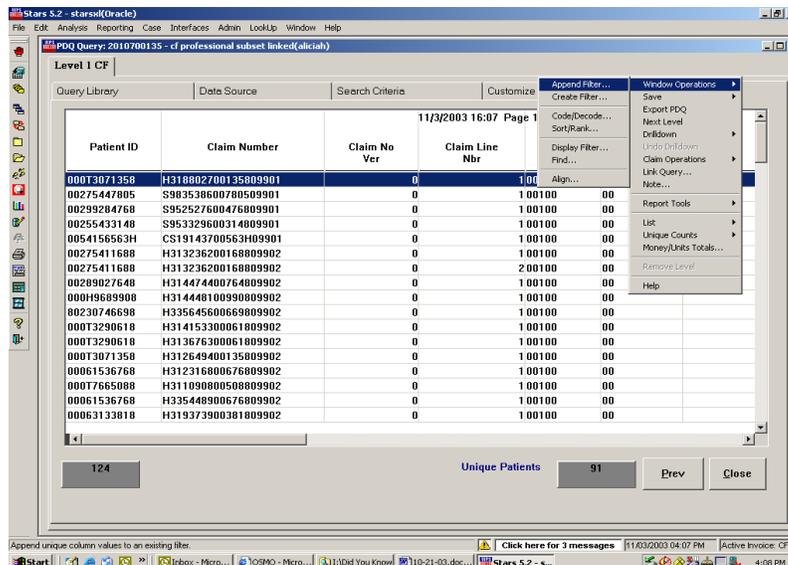
The inpatient and outpatient claims are housed in two different invoice types. Using STARS you query the inpatient claims and create a filter of the patients with the targeted condition. Now, you have part of your list in the filter but you need to add any additional IDs that can be found on the outpatient claims to get a comprehensive list of all the patients that you want to follow.

To use this feature:

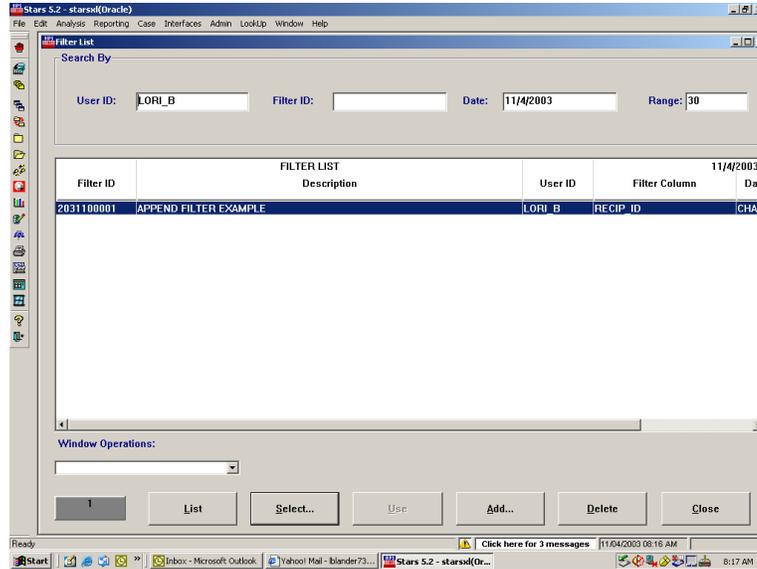
1. Query the first invoice type (ex: inpatient claims) and create the filter of resulting patient IDs. Make sure that the Filter Add screen is closed.



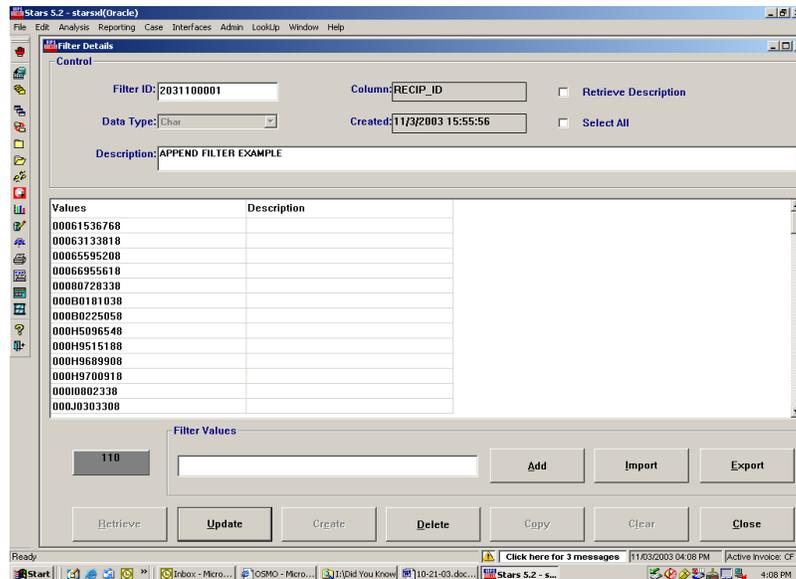
2. Query the second invoice type (ex: outpatient claims) and have the results on the View Report tab.



3. In the Window Operations menu, select Append Filter.
4. Double-click the column heading of the column (ex: Patient ID) you would like to add to the previously created filter. The Filter List opens.



5. Select the filter to which you would like to add, either by double-clicking it, or by highlighting it and clicking the Select button. In the example you would pick the filter you created from the inpatient claims.
6. The result is one filter (with the original Filter ID number) containing both sets of data. The system automatically removes any duplicates from when combining the two sets of values.



7. You now have a comprehensive list of unique Patient IDs derived from two queries, one from the inpatient claims and one from the outpatient claims. Change the Filter Description if necessary, and click the Update button to save the results. ★

Did You Know ? -

Did you know that STARS has 'Print Preview' functionality?

If you are viewing a report in STARS and want to see how it will print, use the 'Page Layout' feature of STARS. Access to this feature is through the 'Report Zoom' function. 'Report Zoom' is used to change the size of the report as seen on your screen.

'Report Zoom' is accessed by clicking on the 'Report Zoom' icon on the toolbar or selecting 'Report Zoom' from the 'File' menu. The 'Report Zoom' window allows you to select the magnification for viewing the report. Selecting 'View as Page Layout' and clicking OK will display the first page of the report in print format. Selecting 'Show Rulers' adds the rulers to the display. The picture below shows the page layout screen with rulers in the background.

Activate 'Report Zoom' through the toolbar or the 'File' menu.

Selecting this turns on the 'Page Layout' screen. Rulers can also be displayed.

Bene Sex	Bene State	Date From Clm	Date Admt/Strt	Date Discharge	Date Thru Clm	DRG Code	Type of Admit	Amt Billed Clm	Amt Paid Claim
			11/02/2002	06/06/2079	12/15/2002	090	2	36,985.49	13,920.15
			11/23/2002	12/07/2002	12/07/2002	462	3	15,114.50	11,703.60
			11/07/2002					21,314.72	10,262.22
			10/14/2002					44,111.12	11,770.97
			12/03/2002					42,816.34	15,067.96
			10/31/2002					44,000.00	
			11/04/2002					30,348.55	
			09/28/2002					191,859.83	
			11/14/2002					48,377.53	
M	CA	12/04/2002	12/04/2002					63,891.76	
M	PA	12/01/2002	12/01/2002					16,623.05	
F	PA	11/04/2002	11/04/2002					9,145.88	
F	PA	11/25/2002	11/25/2002					25,395.75	
M	PA	11/09/2002	11/09/2002					16,142.29	
M	PA	11/29/2002	11/29/2002					45,925.67	
M	PA	10/29/2002	10/29/2002					13,084.44	12,299.37
M	MD	10/31/2002	10/31/2002					64,085.25	13,086.48
M	PA	12/11/2002	12/11/2002					126,043.49	22,131.23
M	PA	11/15/2002	11/15/2002	12/11/2002	12/11/2002	376	1	195,576.56	52,708.00
F	PA	09/27/2002	09/27/2002	06/06/2079	11/30/2002	029	3	24,526.80	11,634.96
F	PA	12/06/2002	12/06/2002	12/12/2002	12/12/2002	516	1	36,635.54	28,069.60
M	PA	01/19/2002	01/19/2002	02/05/2002	02/05/2002	462	3	23,005.71	10,005.81
F	PA	12/11/2002	12/11/2002	12/12/2002	12/12/2002	517	1	11,836.90	
F	PA	09/16/2002	09/16/2002	09/26/2002	09/26/2002	462	3		

PAGE LAYOUT NOTES:
1. Only one page will display and scrolling is not permitted.

When 'View as Page Layout' is first selected, the magnification is set to 'Custom' and 55%. This can be adjusted as necessary. While in the 'Page Layout' view, only the first page of the report will be displayed and scrolling isn't available but the column widths can be adjusted to achieve the desired layout by clicking on the column borders and dragging them. To return to the normal view, choose the 'Report Zoom' option again and click 'Cancel Zoom'. ★

Online TRAINING Opportunity

On December 11, ViPS will offer a training session using WebEx, our on-line, interactive training tool. The two-hour class will be presented by our STARS Trainer, Lori Blander. Participants, using WebEx, will interact with Lori and the other participants during the session.

Tuition for the sessions is only \$150 per participant.

To allow for active participation, class size is limited to 15 attendees, so register TODAY to reserve your space.

The following session is offered:

December 11 - Patterns

This 2 hour session will give you an overview of pattern report creation and use. Patterns can be a powerful tool for detecting aberrant billing practices. In this session you will learn to set up and use patterns, as well as explore their use to uncover fraud schemes such as unbundling of panels, services not rendered and duplicate billing. Both 'like-claim' and 'cross-claim' analysis, as well as multi-level patterns will be covered.

To Register:

- *Go to ViPS.webex.com.*
- *Select the "Upcoming" tab.*
- *Find the STARS Patterns session for 12/11/03 and select "Registration".*
- *Enter all required information on the registration form.*
Registrants will be billed \$150 for the session based on the information provided.
- *After registration, you will receive email giving you instructions for signing into the December 11 session.*

Come learn with us!

STARS 5.2 SP1 Availability

We are happy to report that the implementation of STARS 5.2 at our customer sites has gone very smoothly. Sites have reported that if they follow the pre-migration checklist and are careful in their preparations, the migrations have been quick and easy. Once implemented, very few priority issues have surfaced with 5.2.

In the meantime, ViPS has been busily working on 5.2 SP1. We are working to incorporate and test additional features and fix any glitches that have surfaced in STARS 5.2. STARS 5.2 SP1 is expected to be available at the end of the first quarter of 2004. Although this is later than was originally planned, we hope our sites will appreciate the valuable content that we'll be able to incorporate into this service pack.

In the meantime, be sure to bring your site up to STARS 5.2 and give us feedback on the new features.

Customer Service Website

www.vipsassist.com

The VIPSAssist website is your best source of information on STARS. This is where you'll find release notes, news, manuals, FAQs and a host of additional information. Call STARCare if you need instructions for connecting to VIPSAssist.