

After entering both VARIABLE-POINTERS, when you enter a single question mark ("?") at the "PROVIDER" field prompt, you will see the following Help message:

```

PROVIDER: ?
  Enter one of the following:
    S.EntryName to select a Staff Provider
    O.EntryName to select a Other Provider

  To see the entries in any particular file type <Prefix.??>

```

Figure 129: An Example of Help Associated with a VARIABLE-POINTER Field

In this example, if you simply enter a name at the "PROVIDER:" prompt, then the system will search each of the VARIABLE-POINTER field files for the name you have entered.

If a match is found, the system will ask you if it is the correct entry. However, if you know the file the entry should be in, then you can speed processing by using the following syntax to select an entry:

- **PREFIX.entry name**
- **MESSAGE.entry name**
- **File Name.entry name**



You do *not* need to enter the entire file name or message to direct the lookup. Using the first few characters will suffice.



You can review and change a file's field attributes easily by running the Modify File Attributes option in Screen Mode. For an example of entering a VARIABLE-POINTER DATA TYPE in Screen Mode, please refer to the "Examples of File and Field Creation" topic that follows.

MUMPS DATA TYPE

Those with programmer access can define a field as a MUMPS DATA TYPE. This DATA TYPE is designed specifically to contain executable M code. The code entered into this kind of field is verified to be valid M code that conforms to VA programming standards.

MUMPS DATA TYPE fields are usually used in files that are part of developer tools systems. For example, the OPTION file (#19) is part of the MENU MANAGEMENT system used in the VA for assigning menus and associated actions to each computer user. The ENTRY ACTION field on the OPTION file is defined as a MUMPS type field. This field allows a developer who is creating an option to enter M code to do any setup and initialization that is needed before the end user can do the action allowed by the option.