

**TO:** Cancer Committee Chairs, Cancer Liaison Physicians, Cancer Program Administrators, Cancer Registrars, Co-Registrars  
**FROM:** Christopher Pezzi, MD, FACS, Chair, Quality Integration Committee  
**SUBJECT:** NCDB Call for Data 2012

December 8, 2011

The CoC is committed to assisting hospital cancer programs with maintaining the highest level of data quality possible. We appreciate your facility's participation and contribution to the National Cancer Data Base. The submissions are a valuable resource for assessing and improving the quality of cancer patient care. This information enables cancer programs to compare treatment and outcomes with regional, state, and national patterns.

The NCDB Call for Data cycle is completing its shift from a 5-year submission cycle to annual submissions in which the initial submissions are made in January and corrections are due by April 1 of the same year. An overview is provided below. Please see <http://www.facs.org/cancer/ncdb/registrars.html> for full details.

January 2012 will be the first time that cases diagnosed in 2010 are submitted to NCDB. All analytic cases diagnosed in 2010 must be submitted during January. In addition, cases changed by the registrar since the diagnosis year's cases were last collected in an NCDB Call for Data must be submitted for all analytic cases diagnosed between the program's Reference year (or 1985 if the Reference year is earlier than 1985) and 2009, inclusive. Registry software will have built-in procedures to assist registrars with case selection. The specific dates that apply are available on the website mentioned above. Registries are encouraged to submit their data early in January rather than waiting until the deadline if they are able, for smoother processing.

Newly numbered in 2012, Standard 5.5 (timely submission) applies to all cases collected by NCDB in 2012. Initial submission is due by midnight the night of January 31, 2012, Central time. Cases that are "rejected" have technically not been submitted, and must be corrected and resubmitted for compliance with Standard 5.5. Extensions for Standard 5.5 will be given only under highly unique circumstances. If sought, extensions must be requested prior to the submission deadline.

Standard 5.6 (clean data) applies to all cases diagnosed in 2003 or later. For compliance with Standard 5.6, all edit errors for cases that were diagnosed in 2003 through 2010 must be corrected and case reports resubmitted by April 1, 2012. To be eligible for possible commendation, all cases diagnosed in 2003 through 2010 must be error-free at initial submission. No extensions are granted for Standard 5.6 deadlines. Programs are encouraged to make any necessary corrections promptly.

NCDB provides many mechanisms for programs to track their submissions. An automated notification acknowledging receipt of data submissions is e-mailed to the person who submitted the file, but does not report on its contents. Once a submission file is processed, a second notification is sent to the program's registrar identifying the number of cases submitted by diagnosis year, and whether there are any edit problems or rejected records that need to be corrected. Similar file-by-file information is available in DataLinks in the NCDB Data Transmission section and in the SAR.

NCDB recommends that programs retain copies of all notifications related to data submission until after those cases are surveyed, and routinely follow the web reports during the submission period to assure that all cases submitted are successfully received and processed.

In 2011, the "NCDB Data Submissions Reports" was initiated. This new tracking report identifies the cumulative edit problems remaining to be resolved once all submissions have been processed, and provides the number of unique cases submitted by the program during each submission period. This report is available through DataLinks.

The CoC and NCDB staff deeply appreciate the dedicated work and attention to detail of all cancer registry staff at CoC-accredited cancer programs as the NCDB has moved through this past years' transition to an annual update cycle. As a consequence of this transition, we anticipate being able to provide feedback to all of our accredited programs in a more timely manner, starting with 2010 updates to our reporting applications in the spring of 2012, more than 4-6 months earlier than in previous years.

Everything necessary to prepare for the NCDB Call for Data can be reached from <http://www.facs.org/cancer/ncdb/datasubmission.html>. If you or a member of your cancer program team has any questions regarding the NCDB Call for Data, please contact NCDB at [NCDB@facs.org](mailto:NCDB@facs.org).

Regards,

Christopher Pezzi, MD, FACS

The National Cancer Data Base (NCDB), a joint program of the Commission on Cancer and the American Cancer Society, is a nationwide oncology outcomes database for more than 1,500 CoC-accredited cancer programs in the United States and Puerto Rico, capturing approximately 70 percent of all newly diagnosed cases of cancer annually. Started in 1989, the NCDB contains approximately 25 million case records. Data collected include patient characteristics, tumor staging and histology characteristics, type of first course treatment administered, disease recurrence, and survival information. These data are used to explore trends in cancer care, create regional and state benchmarks for participating hospitals, and to serve as the basis for quality improvement.

