



CoC Flash

A Monthly News Update from the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons



August 2003

Highlights of the Month:

- Order Cancer Program Standards 2004
- Important Information Coming to CoC-Approved Cancer Programs
- NCDB EDITS Metafile Available Soon
- State Chair and Cancer Liaison Physician Resource Areas on Web
- Cite I & R Reference Source
- Approval Award Notification Process
- Register Online for Clinical Congress 2003
- Applicability of the HIPAA Privacy Rule to The American Cancer Society's Support Services
- Empower Cancer Patients from the Day of Diagnosis
- Spotlight on CoC Member Organization: Oncology Nursing Society

Order Cancer Program Standards 2004

The CoC has a published version of *Cancer Program Standards 2004* available for purchase. The cost is \$30. Please see the Publications and Services Catalog of the American College of Surgeons at <http://www.facs.org/commerce/2003/catsplash.html> for a product description and ordering information. If you are unable to order online, please print the order form available on that page and follow the instructions to place a mail order.

Important Information Coming to CoC-Approved Cancer Programs

Administrators, cancer committee chairs, cancer liaison physicians, and cancer registrars in CoC-approved cancer programs may expect to receive a memo the week of September 8th that outlines CoC activities which will impact your cancer program in 2004. This memo covers important information on the following activities:

- * *Cancer Program Standards 2004*
- * Information for Programs Due for Survey During 2004
- * Changes in the Role of the Cancer Liaison Physician
- * Facility Information Profile System (FIPS): Is Your Cancer Program Taking Advantage of this FREE Marketing Resource?
- * CoC Special Studies
- * CoC Data Disclosure Policy
- * FORDS Update
- * Topics Available for Presentation by your CoC State Chair or Cancer Liaison Physician

This memo will also be posted on our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/cannews.html>.

NCDB EDITS Metafile Available Soon

The NCDB EDITS Metafile for the 2002, 1997, 1992, 1987 Call for Data will be available on the NCDB Web page (<http://www.facs.org/cancer/ncdb/index.html>) late next week. This metafile contains edits which presume the conversion of data from *ROADS* to *FORDS*. Documentation outlining how to use the NCDB EDITS, including a description of the content and logic of each edit and which edits carry specific quality scores, will also be available on the NCDB Web page.

Registries submitting data that meet the quality criteria for the NCDB Annual Call for Data upon initial submission will receive a "Commendation" from the CoC Approvals Program (*Cancer Program Standards 2004*: Standard 3.7). A written communication to CoC-approved cancer program registries

providing further details on the NCDB's Annual Call for Data will be forthcoming in September.

State Chair and Cancer Liaison Physician Resource Areas on Web

The CoC recently added new areas to our Web site that provide information specifically for State Chairs and CLPs. On these pages are links to American Cancer Society resources, CoC updates, and other essential information to keep State Chairs and CLPs up-to-date and enable them to fulfill their responsibilities as CoC volunteers. Got to <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/liaison.html> to see what is available.

Cite I & R Reference Source

The goal of the Inquiry and Response (I & R) team is to respond to questions submitted in an accurate and timely manner. In order to assist the team in doing so, please be sure to specify the reference that applies to your question: *ROADS*, *FORDS*, *AJCC Cancer Staging Manual* 5th or 6th Edition, *Cancer Program Standards Volume I* or *Cancer Program Standards 2004*. If a reference is not cited, we will need to return the question and ask for a reference which will, unfortunately, delay the response time.

The CoC is reviewing future modifications to the I & R System that will enable users to either select a reference when entering a question or to list the year the case was diagnosed. Both of these options will assist us in identifying the correct reference to use when answering your question.

We thank you for making the I & R System such a useful resource. Submit questions to Inquiry@facs.org.

Approval Award Notification Process

Approval award notification takes place approximately 8 to 12 weeks following cancer program survey. Due to the detailed review process and the need for award confirmation by the Program Review Subcommittee, we cannot guarantee the shorter turnaround time of eight weeks. Rest assured that the Cancer Programs staff makes every effort to ensure a timely return on the results. For this reason, we ask that inquiries to the CoC for the status of survey be held until the twelfth week post-survey. Thank you for your cooperation.

Register Online for Clinical Congress 2003

Don't forget to visit <http://www.facs.org/2003clincon/index.html> to register online and make hotel reservations for the 89th Annual Clinical Congress in Chicago, October 19-23, 2003. Each year the Clinical Congress brings thousands of surgeons and other health care professionals together to learn, teach, and share experiences about the joys and challenges of contemporary surgical practice. Don't miss this exciting educational opportunity.

Registration is open to all physicians and individuals in the health care field, and is free for Fellows, Initiates, Associate Fellows, Candidate Group Members, and Medical Student Members. Registration includes a name badge, program, and entrance to the exhibits and all sessions other than postgraduate courses. Registered attendees may purchase postgraduate course tickets based upon availability. Advance registration is strongly encouraged.

Applicability of the HIPAA Privacy Rule to The American Cancer Society's Support Services

As a partner and member organization of the Commission, the American Cancer Society (ACS) has asked us to provide the following information to our constituents regarding the applicability of the HIPAA Privacy Rules to their work.

The ACS provides free counseling and educational programs for cancer patients throughout the nation such as Reach to Recovery for breast cancer patients and Man to Man for prostate cancer patients. The key to the ability of the ACS to deliver these programs has been the willingness of physicians and hospitals to promote ACS programs to their patients. The ACS has been concerned that the HIPAA privacy regulations could create a barrier to their ability to provide these services and, as a result, they sought guidance from Tommy Thompson, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, on the continued ability of covered entities like hospitals and physicians to disclose protected health information (PHI) to ACS assistance programs.

The ACS would like to report that it was successful in obtaining the following favorable guidance from

Secretary Thompson:

-Hospitals and physicians are permitted to disclose PHI to the ACS in connection with their assistance programs which provide health care and related services the patient such as Reach to Recover and Man to Man without the necessity of patient authorization.

-For those ACS programs that do not provide health care services such as Road to Recovery, Hope Lodges, and Look Good, Feel Better, the privacy regulations permit the disclosure of PHI to ACS with verbal permission from the patient, or the patient's personal representative, if the hospital or physician first explains the ACS's services, then asks if the patient wants to have the ACS involved, and then confirms that the patient (or the personal representative) does not object to the disclosure.

We are communicating this information on behalf of the ACS, so they can continue to provide free services to patients unimpeded by unnecessary fears of violating the HIPAA Privacy Rules. The ACS is dedicated to retaining the confidentiality of patient information by complying with all state and federal regulations with respect to privacy.

Empower Cancer Patients from the Day of Diagnosis

Be Empowered, Inc. is a national, not-for-profit organization dedicated to both educating and supporting people with cancer at the time of diagnosis. The organization has developed a *bag of power* that includes written materials (the importance of support groups, journal keeping), published brochures from known sources (American Cancer Society, NIH), and products to help people cope with life from the day of diagnosis (magazines focused on cancer, notebooks/pens, meditation tapes, stress relievers). Targeted to the newly diagnosed patient, there is no cost to physicians, cancer care providers, or the cancer patient for these materials.

Their goal is to help each cancer patient easily find his/her sense of power as soon as they are thrown into what feels like a powerless situation. Their hope is that physicians will present the *bag of power* after delivering a cancer finding.

For information on the *bag of power*, contact Be Empowered, Inc. at (214) 438-3707 or EMPOWER181@aol.com. Or write to Be Empowered, Inc., PO Box 831537, Richardson, TX 75083-1537. Their Web site is expected to be online by September at <http://www.Bempowered.org>.

Spotlight on CoC Member Organization: Oncology Nursing Society

The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) has been a member organization of the Commission of Cancer (CoC) since 1982. The current representative is Patricia Owen, RN, MS, with Northside Hospital in Atlanta, GA. Ms. Owen was recently involved in the Cancer Programs Standards Workgroup, which was responsible for updating the new CoC Cancer Program Standards.

ONS is a professional organization of more than 30,000 registered nurses and other health care providers dedicated to excellence in patient care, education, research, and administration in oncology nursing. It is the largest professional oncology association in the world. With its vision of leading the transformation of cancer care and its mission of promoting excellence in oncology nursing and quality cancer care, ONS has become a leader in cancer care.

In 2002, ONS opened a new 100,000 square-foot building, which stands as a symbol for the firm foundation that ONS has built during its relatively short 32-year history. The society offers useful information and opportunities for nurses at all levels, in all practice settings, and in all subspecialties. The current focus of ONS is to secure legislative support to address the nursing shortage issue and other cancer-related legislative activities.

ONS members are a diverse group of professionals who represent a variety of professional roles, practice settings, and subspecialty practice areas. Registered nurses, including staff nurses, advanced practice nurses, case managers, educators, researchers, and consultants, and other health care professionals, benefit from membership. We invite you to learn more about ONS and its institutes and programs by visiting its Web site at <http://www.ons.org>.

To Subscribe to CoC Flash

CoC Flash is e-mailed automatically each month to individuals for whom the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons has an e-mail address. If you wish to continue to receive the newsletter on a monthly basis, you need do nothing. You can discontinue your subscription by writing to coc@facs.org and requesting that your name be deleted from the database. Individuals not currently receiving the newsletter may subscribe to the publication by sending an e-mail containing your name,

address, telephone and fax numbers to coc@facs.org, and asking to be added to our electronic distribution database.

To Submit Information

CoC Flash will accept submissions received by the third week of each month. However, the CoC reserves the right to decide whether or not the materials are appropriate for inclusion. Information for CoC Flash should be timely, newsworthy, brief, and of use and interest to the constituents of the Commission, which include cancer registrars, liaison physicians, cancer committee chairs, and other cancer-oriented health care professionals. To submit material, send it to coc@facs.org.

Mission

The Commission on Cancer is a consortium of professional organizations dedicated to reducing the morbidity and mortality of cancer through education, standard setting, and the monitoring of quality care. CoC Flash is a monthly news service for constituents of the CoC provided by the Commission and the Cancer Department of the American College of Surgeons.

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