



Commission  
on Cancer

# Flash



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

## August 2007

### Highlights for the Month:

- CoC-Approved Cancer Programs Predominate List of Nation's Top 50 Cancer Centers
- CLP Outstanding Performance Award Recipients Announced
- CoC Meetings to be Held in October
- NCDB Call for Data Begins September 10
- CoC Web Conference Series Continues
- Politics–Health Care–And the Next Presidential Election
- Web Conferences to be Held for CLPs
- ACS Breast Screening with MRI Guidelines Presentation Available
- 2007 SAR Annual Update
- New CoC Ambassador Program to Offer Guidance and Information
- NCDB to Survey CoC-Approved Programs on Data Feedback Activities
- Coding Prostate Cancer: A Message from the Collaborative Staging Steering Committee
- Collaborative Staging Update
- Gynecologic Cancer Foundation Announces Cancer Awareness Month
- Visit Upcoming Exhibits
- Register Now for the NAACCR Webinar Series
- NCRA: Tips for Taking the CTR Exam–Live Webinar
- Submit Presentation Proposals for NCRA 2008
- Spotlight on CoC Member Organization: Society of Gynecologic Oncologists (SGO)

### CoC-Approved Cancer Programs Predominate List of Nation's Top 50 Cancer Centers

The July 23–30, 2007, issue of *US News & World Report* presented its 18th annual ranking of the best medical facilities in the country based on overall quality and 12 areas of specialty, including cancer. Of the nation's top 50 cancer programs ranked as providing the best care, 34 are CoC-Approved Cancer Programs. Even more importantly, the majority of these programs have earned Three-Year with Commendation Approval status.

For this annual ranking, the score is calculated for hospitals by specialties to summarize the overall quality of inpatient care. One-third of each hospital's score is based on reputation, one-third on mortality, and one-third on a mix of other factors that varies by specialty, such as number of discharges, nursing care, and technology. A score of 100 is assigned to each specialty's top-ranked hospital. For more information and a list of the top 50 programs, go to <http://health.usnews.com/besthospitals>. Congratulations to those programs providing exemplary cancer care.

### CLP Outstanding Performance Award Recipients Announced

Please join the CoC in congratulating the 57 liaisons who've received this award for outstanding performance in 2006. This distinguished group represents 23 states and approximately three percent of the Cancer Liaison Physician network.

The Cancer Liaison Physician Outstanding Performance Award recognizes those individuals who have gone above and beyond the scope of their regular duties. CLPs were nominated for excellence in the following area(s):

- Improving the quality of care delivered at a CoC-approved facility
- Contributing to the Approval status of the cancer program
- Exceeding CLP expectations to strengthen the cancer program
- Demonstrating cancer control leadership in the community
- Serving as a champion and role model for other staff

A complete list of recipients is posted on the CoC Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/liaison.html>.

We thank each and every one of you for your commitment to the delivery of high-quality cancer care and appreciate the time you dedicate to this volunteer position!

## CoC Annual Meetings to be Held in October

CoC members, state chairs, surveyors, and cancer liaison physicians are invited to attend the CoC meetings being held in conjunction with the American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress, October 7-11 in New Orleans, LA. The CoC Annual Meeting is an open meeting scheduled for Sunday, October 7 from 3:00 to 5:15pm at the New Orleans Hilton Hotel. Topics featured on the agenda will include an update on CoC activities, a multidisciplinary panel discussion on breast imaging, and a special recognition for Harmon Eyre, MD, Chief Medical Officer of the American Cancer Society. Presentations from the meetings will be posted on the CoC Web site by late-October.

In addition, the Cancer Liaison Program Breakfast Meeting agenda will include a review of the new focus areas defined for CLPs for 2007–2008, presentations on CLP involvement in cancer advocacy and legislative issues, and a speaker panel to discuss the utilization of data, increasing clinical trial participation, and American Cancer Society partnership.

The CoC's Oncology Lecture will be delivered by John Niederhuber, MD, FACS, director of the National Cancer Institute, on Wednesday, October 10, at the Morial Convention Center. Additionally, several general, multidisciplinary, and specialty sessions will be sponsored by the CoC. These sessions will take place Monday through Wednesday; consult the Clinical Congress Book for locations.

And don't forget to stop by the CoC, American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC), and National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC) exhibits in the exhibit hall. Our staff will be on hand to provide information and answer questions.

Remember, if you plan on attending, **please respond to your invitation by September 7**. For a complete list of meetings, times, and locations, visit our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/schedules/meetcon.html#coc07> or contact Tracy Rausch at [trausch@facs.org](mailto:trausch@facs.org).

## NCDB Call for Data Begins September 10

The 18th Annual NCDB Call for Data will open September 10. The deadline for initial submissions is November 2, 2007, and corrections for rejected records and for 2006 cases with edit problems must be submitted by June 1, 2008. Announcements of the Call for Data were e-mailed to cancer programs last week.

Since there have been very few modifications to the NCDB data submission requirements in the past several years, the CoC expects programs to be able to meet submission deadlines.

- Beginning with submission years 2006, 2001, 1996, 1991, and 1986, extensions to the submission deadline will be given only in highly unusual situations, and no extensions will be given to programs that received extensions in both of the past two years.
- No extensions for the data correction deadline will be granted.

- Extensions to the data submission deadline to comply with Standard 3.6 will affect the program's compliance with Standard 3.7, so that submissions for the most recent year requested in the Call (2006) will not be eligible for the commendation rating even if the initial submission of the data is error free.

Call for Data information is available online at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/ncdb/datasubmission.html>. Again, the years covered by the Call are 2006, 2001, 1996, 1991, and 1986. Resubmissions for any diagnosis year between 1985 and 2006 may be made. The edit and layout specifications for the current Call for Data will apply for the resubmissions.

## CoC Web Conference Series Continues

The CoC will host two new programs in September that are open to all audiences. See our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/coceduc.html> for the most up-to-date course objectives and participant information. Each of these Web conferences can accommodate 500 participants.

- Please note that dial-in information may change. Plan to consult the CoC Web site the day of the Web conference to confirm the information.
- The CoC, or 'Moderator,' will connect to the program 10 minutes prior to the start time listed. **It is not necessary for you to dial-in more than 15 minutes before the program** is to begin.
- A printable handout copy of the presentation is made available online the day before each Web conference.

### Schedule

#### **September 19: What is the Pediatric Cancer Program Component Category?**

Time: 11:00am (ET); 10:00am (CT); 9:00am (MT); 8:00am (PT)

#### **September 28: Windows: A New Environment for EDITS (Repeat)**

Time: 11:00am (ET); 10:00am (CT); 9:00am (MT); 8:00am (PT)

## Politics—Health Care—And the Next Presidential Election

Join the CoC July 13-15, 2008, in Baltimore, MD, for its bi-annual conference which will offer a variety of informative and timely topics affecting cancer patient care in the United States.

It's time to understand and get involved in the legislative and regulatory issues having an impact on the future of cancer care.

Clinical Trials Funding  
Pay for Performance  
Workforce Issues  
Advocacy Efforts  
Cancer Screening and Prevention  
Disparities in Care  
And much more.....

Additional information will be available in *CoC Flash* and on the CoC's Web site by early 2008.

## Web Conferences to be Held for CLPs

Need role clarification? Have questions about the Cancer Liaison Physician's (CLP) responsibilities? Join us for the next Web conference to get a better understanding of the activities of the CLP. Facilitated by a CoC State Chair, this is your opportunity to ask questions.

### Role of the Cancer Liaison Physician

#### **Tuesday, October 2, 2007**

Time: 5:00pm (ET); 4:00pm (CT); 3:00pm (MT); 2:00pm (PT)

Facilitator: Terry Sarantou, MD, FACS, North Carolina State Chair

**Thursday, December 6, 2007**

Time: 10:00am (ET); 9:00am (CT); 8:00am (MT); 7:00am (PT)

Facilitator: David Sheldon, MD, FACS, Pennsylvania State Chair

See our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/clpwebconferences.html> for participation instructions. If you have questions, please contact Carolyn Jones at (312) 202-5183 or [cjones@facs.org](mailto:cjones@facs.org).

## **ACS Breast Guidelines with MRI Presentation Available**

If you were unable to participate in the August 6 Web conference sponsored by the CoC and the American Cancer Society or would like to view the information again, you'll find the entire program, including slides and audio, available online at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/webconf7.html>.

## **2007 SAR Annual Update**

The CoC monitors several standards as part of the SAR Annual Update process. This monitoring serves as a method to gather information on program activity that will enable the CoC to provide summary comparison data to the programs, the Committee on Approvals, and other constituent groups. An initial e-mail and a reminder notification describing the SAR Annual Update process were sent to all approved programs in June and August 2007. The content of the initial e-mail notification is currently posted on the Accreditation/Cancer Program Approval/Survey-Specific Resources page of the American College of Surgeons Web site: <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/surveyresources.html>. The Annual Update is active from July 1 - September 30. The "working" SAR will not close after September 30; all other standards and tables may be entered and edited throughout the year.

The CoC is requesting that your cancer program review, complete, and/or update 2005 and 2006 program activity and information ONLY for the following standards or areas in your facility or network's Survey Application Record (SAR). The information requested is:

- Standard 2.8 (caseload and tumor board presentations)
- Standard 5.2 (clinical trial accrual)
- The Cancer Liaison Physician Activity Report

Please note that programs scheduled for 2007 survey will NOT be required to participate in the Annual Update because this information is already recorded as part of the survey preparation process.

Questions about the SAR or Annual Update should be submitted by e-mail to [SAR@facs.org](mailto:SAR@facs.org). Questions regarding your CoC Datalinks User ID and Password should be submitted by e-mail to [CoCdatalinks@facs.org](mailto:CoCdatalinks@facs.org).

## **New CoC Ambassador Program to Offer Guidance and Information**

We are excited to offer a new program for facilities interested in the Approvals Program, but not yet approved by the CoC. The Ambassador Program was designed for facilities that have several components of their cancer program in place, but need encouragement to propel the program toward CoC Approval. An Ambassador of the CoC is available to provide the information and details on the benefits of CoC Approval that can help your program commit to achieving this recognition.

During the initial portion of the two-hour visit, the Ambassador will meet with members of administration and medical staff as well as other cancer program staff to review the many benefits of CoC Approval. During the second half of the visit, the Ambassador will facilitate a dialogue with the participants, discuss challenges that may be keeping the facility from seeking Approval, and help develop solutions to help the program progress toward the initial survey.

Through this open dialogue process, our Ambassador will provide the encouragement and guidance your staff needs to initiate the Approvals Process for your facility.

We are pleased to announce that several programs across the country are making plans to host a

CoC Ambassador! Watch the *CoC Flash* for additional updates on the success of this program. To arrange for a visit from a CoC Ambassador or if you have questions regarding the Ambassador Program, please feel free to contact Karen Stachon at [kstachon@facs.org](mailto:kstachon@facs.org).

## **NCDB to Survey CoC-Approved Programs on Data Feedback Activities**

As part of its efforts to improve and fine-tune the benefits made available to its Approved Cancer Programs, the CoC is evaluating the services of the National Cancer Data Base (NCDB), and will be asking cancer committee chairs, program administrators, liaison physicians, and registrars to complete a short survey to help identify areas for improvement for NCDB data feedback activities to your cancer program. Facility representatives mentioned above will receive special e-mail announcement in September with a link to the survey. Because you are our valued constituents, we look forward to your participation and responses.

## **Coding Prostate Cancer: A Message from the Collaborative Staging Steering Committee**

### **Clarification on the Use of Outside Resources for Coding Prostate Cancer**

A great deal of confusion surrounds the interpretation of clinical reports with regard to whether the prostate cancer was apparent or inapparent. In 1998, SEER published an interpretation of "apparent" and "inapparent" terms for use in their Extent of Disease (EOD) Coding System for prostate cancer. This list was in effect for prostate EOD cases diagnosed in 1998-2003. There were several questions regarding whether this list could be used in Collaborative Staging (CS). After consultation with the AJCC curators for genitourinary disease, the CS Steering Committee has determined that the SEER list of terms for apparent and inapparent in the SEER Extent of Disease Manual is NOT to be used for interpreting reports for Collaborative Staging. While it was a convenient tool for registrars, the curators are of the opinion that the use of the list will lead to misinterpretation of reports. Rather, the curators recommend that registrars rely on a direct physician statement of apparent or inapparent disease for Collaborative Staging. It is not anticipated that prior cases will require review and recoding.

Registrars should continue to send problem cases to CoC I&R or SEER SINQ as they continue coding cases without reference to the list.

## **Collaborative Staging Update**

The Collaborative Staging (CS) Steering Committee is currently working on an update to the Collaborative Staging System that will be released on October 31, 2007 as Version 01.04.00.

An announcement detailing the changes included in this release will be made on October 31, 2007. It will include effective dates for this version as defined by each standard-setting agency. Cancer registry software vendors have been made aware of this expected release date and will be updating their products accordingly.

Version 01.04.00 will encompass minor changes identified through the CS Reliability Study, concerns identified through case abstracting, and questions from the CoC I&R and SEER SINQ systems. This release clarifies coding issues identified by registrars, but does not contain major changes.

As of October 31, the CS Web site, <http://cancerstaging.org/cstage/index.html>, will include resources required to implement the new version, and the AJCC will be hosting national Web conferences to review the changes. Details will be provided in *CoC Flash* and posted on the CS Web site. Questions should be sent to the AJCC at [AJCC@facs.org](mailto:AJCC@facs.org).

## **Gynecologic Cancer Foundation Announces Cancer Awareness Month**

September is both Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month and Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. This year the Gynecologic Cancer Foundation (GCF) is joining with the ovarian cancer advocacy community in educating women about the symptoms of ovarian cancer.

In June 2007, a new national consensus statement on ovarian cancer symptoms was announced.

Formulated by GCF, the Society of Gynecologic Oncologists and the American Cancer Society, the consensus statement (online at <http://www.thegcf.org/>) has been endorsed by 38 gynecologic cancer advocacy organizations.

Historically, ovarian cancer was called the “silent killer” because symptoms were not thought to develop until the chance of cure was poor. However, recent studies have shown this term is untrue and that the following symptoms are much more likely to occur in women with ovarian cancer than women in the general population: bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, and urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency).

The GCF has developed a publicity kit for Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month, which includes information, tips and tools for events, reaching the media, and sharing key messages. For more information and to access the publicity kit, visit [http://www.thegcf.org/pubs/order\\_gcam07.htm](http://www.thegcf.org/pubs/order_gcam07.htm).

## Visit Upcoming Exhibits

The CoC, American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC), and the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC) will be exhibiting at the following meetings in September:

### **2007 Breast Cancer Symposium**

NAPBC Booth (#7)  
Staff attending: Cindy Burgin  
September 7– 8  
Marriott, San Francisco, CA

### **College of American Pathologists (CAP)**

CoC Booth (#614)  
AJCC Booth (#616)  
Staff attending: Asa Carter, Vicki Chiappetta, Lisa Landvogt, Karen Pollitt, and Karen Stachon  
September 30–October 1  
Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Chicago, IL

If you are attending these meetings, stop by the CoC, AJCC, and NAPBC booths to speak with staff and see the new materials the CoC, AJCC, and NAPBC have to offer.

## Register Now for the NAACCR Webinar Series

There is still time to register for the 2nd NAACCR Webinar series. The series of eight sessions will be presented between October 2007, and September 2008. The first session will be presented on October 4, 2007 and the topic is melanoma. By purchasing a subscription for the entire series, you'll receive a substantial discount on the cost compared to purchasing individual sessions. Series subscriptions are available until August 31, 2007. After that, registration will open for individual sessions. The schedule and topics can be accessed from the NAACCR Web site, <http://www.naacccr.org>. We anticipate receiving approval for four NCRA CE hours per session for a total of 32 CE hours for the series.

## NCRA: Tips for Taking the CTR Exam—Live Webinar

This special Webinar moderated by CTR exam prep instructors Donna Gress, RHIT, CTR and Louise Schuman, MA, CTR, is designed to give candidates for the Certified Tumor Registrars Credentialing Exam (CTR Exam) important details about the exam day and what to expect.

Date: September 11, 2007; Start Time 3pm Eastern  
\* It is recommended that you block one hour for this event

FEES: \$50 Member, \$75 Non Member;  
\*Complimentary— For Attendees of the NCRA August 2007 CTR Exam Prep Workshop

Registration Deadline: September 6, 2007

Register online at <http://www.regonline.com/150218>

## Submit Presentation Proposals for NCRA 2008

Share your expertise by bringing important information to your fellow registrars at the NCRA 33rd Annual Educational Conference April 27-30, 2008, in Minneapolis, MN. Complete the proposal information found at <http://ncra.omnicms.com/ncra/2007/callforpapers.cgi>. All proposals will be reviewed by the NCRA Program Committee for consideration. Submit your proposal by September 30, 2007.

## Spotlight on CoC Member Organization: Society of Gynecologic Oncologists (SGO)

The Society of Gynecologic Oncologists (SGO) has been a member organization of the CoC since 1989. The current representative is Maureen Killackey, MD, FACS, FACOG, from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, NY.

The SGO is a national medical specialty society of physicians who are trained in the comprehensive management of women with female reproductive cancers. Its purpose is to improve the care of women with gynecologic cancer by encouraging research, disseminating knowledge which will raise the standards of practice in the prevention and treatment of gynecologic malignancies and cooperating with other organizations interested in women's health care, oncology and related fields. As medical professionals with a special interest and expertise in gynecologic cancers, the SGO's vision is to dedicate their work to helping women conquer the cancers unique to them. They uphold the highest standards of quality care and through research forge new and innovative ways to improve the treatment and care of patients. SGO advocates and contributes to a comprehensive approach to screening, diagnosis and treatment as well as empowering women with knowledge that provides answers, support and hope.

We invite you to learn more about the SGO and its institutes and programs by visiting their Web site at <http://www.sgo.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. 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](mailto: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](mailto:CoC@facs.org).

## Mission

The Commission on Cancer is a consortium of professional organizations dedicated to improving survival and quality of life for cancer patients through standard-setting, prevention, research, education, and the monitoring of comprehensive quality care. *CoC Flash* is a monthly news service for constituents of the CoC provided by the Commission and the Cancer Programs of the American College of Surgeons.

For all the latest information on CoC activities, news, and events, visit our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/index.html>.

For easy printing, a .pdf version of each issue is available online within 72 hours of the time Flash is distributed. Go to <http://www.facs.org/cancer/cocflash/cocflash.html>.



American College of Surgeons [www.facs.org](http://www.facs.org)

[Click here to unsubscribe](#)

633 N Saint Clair St, Chicago, IL 60611-3211