



CoC Flash

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



January 2006

Highlights for the Month:

- Registration Open: Survey Savvy Workshops for NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers and Veterans' Affairs (VA) Facilities
- CoC Hosting Forum at NCRA Conference
- **Save the Date!** "The Commission on Cancer 2006 and Beyond: Measuring the Quality of Your Cancer Care," June 19–20, 2006, Chicago Hilton and Towers
- Request Speakers for Your Spring Meeting Now
- Response Rate to SAR Annual Update Increases
- Excellent Response to NCDB Call for Data
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Registration Open: Survey Savvy Workshops for NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers and Veterans' Affairs (VA) Facilities

In time for the release of modified Cancer Program Standards for National Cancer Institute (NCI)-Designated centers and Veterans' Affairs (VA) facilities, the CoC is holding consecutive one-day Survey Savvy workshops to introduce and provide education on the revised standards to personnel from NCI and VA locations. The program for individuals working within NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers will be held on Monday, March 13; the program for VA personnel will be March 14. Space is still available.

Both workshops will be held at the Renaissance O'Hare Chicago Hotel located near O'Hare International Airport. Free hotel shuttle is available between the airport and hotel. The cost for individuals from CoC-approved programs is \$125; for individuals from non-approved programs it's \$175. The deadline for registration is February 20, 2006.

For links to detailed information about the workshop content, location, and agenda, as well as a registration form, go to our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/cannews.html>.

CoC Hosting Forum at NCRA Conference

The CoC is committed to building upon the dialogue established with cancer registrars from CoC-approved cancer programs during the Forum held at the 2005 National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA) Annual Conference. For those attending the 2006 conference in Alexandria, VA, mark your calendars to attend the 2006 CoC Forum, which is scheduled for Friday, May 5,

from 4:30 to 6:30pm. The Forum will again focus on new initiatives the CoC has under way and will serve as a venue where you can address your issues and concerns.

A communication will be distributed in March that will outline the registration process and solicit your feedback. For more information about the CoC Forum, please contact Connie Bura at cbura@facs.org, or review the CoC article in the “Recent Articles” section of the The Connection at <http://www.ncra-usa.org/resources/connection.htm>.

Save the Date

“The Commission on Cancer 2006 and Beyond: Measuring the Quality of Your Cancer Care,” June 19–20, 2006, Chicago Hilton and Towers

This two-day conference will feature a variety of topics offering insight into effectively using the National Cancer Data Base (NCDB) for data-driven quality initiatives; clinical trial participation and the delivery of quality care; and methods for making a cancer program more effective.

Targeted towards all cancer program team members, health care executives and administrators, quality managers, and payers, the conference will focus on the tangible means for measuring the level of quality care provided by a cancer program.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Mark Clanton, MD, Deputy Director, NCI, Office of Cancer Care Delivery Systems
- Robert L. Comis, MD, President and Chairman of the Coalition of National Cancer Cooperative Groups, Inc.
- Carolyn Clancy, MD, Director, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), Department of Health and Human Services

As the program is further developed, look to CoC Flash and our Web Site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/index.html> for details and information.

Request Speakers for Your Spring Meeting Now

Registry organizations holding meetings before June 2006 and wishing to secure a presenter from the CoC’s Speakers Bureau, should submit a speaker request form as soon as possible. We require requests to be received at least eight weeks before a meeting date. See the Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/coceduc.html>, for topics, speakers, and a request form.

Response Rate to SAR Annual Update Increases

During the 2005 SAR Annual Update period– July 1 through September 30–all CoC-approved cancer programs not being surveyed in 2005 were asked to provide information for standards identified by the CoC’s Committee on Approvals.

Eighty percent of the approved programs not undergoing a survey in 2005 participated in the Annual Update process (270 community, 299 comprehensive, 176 teaching, and 17 NCI programs) a 2% increase in participation from calendar year 2004. These data are currently under review to identify facilities that may be in need of technical assistance to maintain compliance with CoC standards.

The CoC thanks all the programs that participated. We would like to encourage all programs to do so in the future.

Excellent Response to NCDB Call for Data

To date, 1,306 of 1,427 CoC-approved programs have submitted data in response to the current

Call for Data for a total of 3,553,564 case reports.

We encourage programs with edit problems or rejected records to correct them and resubmit the reports as soon as possible. As of late January, 5.1% of 2004 reports have outstanding edit problems, as do 12.7% of 1999 reports, 17.9% of 1994 reports, and 20.1% of 1989 reports.

As a reminder, Standard 3.7 requires that corrections to 2004 cases be resubmitted by September 1, 2006. The 2004 cases are defined as cases diagnosed in 2004 plus cases diagnosed prior to 2004 but with a 2004 date of first contact with the facility. To avoid the pitfalls of procrastination, please try to take care of those cases in the coming weeks. It is not necessary to resubmit records that have already passed all edits if registry software permits submission of corrected reports only. While the Standards do not require edit correction of historic reports (1989, 1994, and 1999), we strongly encourage you to do so.

Edit Now, Save Time Later

Registrars occasionally ask the National Cancer Data Base (NCDB) if they can obtain copies of the NCDB submission edits before a Call for Data submission period begins, rather than waiting until their usual release date in late spring. The NCDB response, "Of course!"

The NCDB draws nearly all of its submission edits from the very comprehensive NAACCR standard edit metafile, and conversations with software providers at last year's NCRA conference indicated that they have the necessary edits available in their software now for registrar use.

Registry software systems vary in how to access the edits needed for editing newly abstracted cases, so it may be necessary to contact your software provider to get instructions. The following edits sets are set aside in the NAACCR standard edit metafile specifically for use when abstracting or updating new analytic cases in CoC-approved programs:

Hosp: Vs 11 CoC Required Confidential (not used by NCDB submission edits)

Hosp: Vs 11 CoC Required Nonconfidential 1

Hosp: Vs 11 CoC Required Nonconfidential 2

Primary Site, AJCC Stage Group Edits, SS Edits

CS Input Field Edits–CoC

CS Derived Field Edits–CoC (to be run after computing derived values)

The edits in these edit sets are selected because they check for consistency with CoC-required items, data definitions, and coding instructions in FORDS, ICD-O-3, the AJCC staging manuals, and the Collaborative Staging manual. Running edits and correcting problems found at the time the cases are abstracted or updated will not only eliminate most or all edit problems at the time of data submission, but it will also identify problems while the patient record is still on hand and corrections can be made quickly and easily. The same edits can be used to check newly abstracted cases and historic cases because they have date specifications built in, when applicable.

The NAACCR standard edit metafile is updated periodically to keep pace with current data requirements, and software providers ordinarily incorporate updated edits with routine software upgrades. A new NAACCR version (NACR110A) was released in January, but you will benefit by beginning now to run all cases through the edits currently available to you without waiting for the next software update.

For additional information, see <http://www.facs.org/cancer/ncdb/newlyabstracted.html>.

Welcome New CoC State Chair

The College is pleased to announce the appointment of a new Commission on Cancer State Chair:

Ashwani Rajput, MD, FACS, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, NY

The Committee on Cancer Liaison is currently looking for surgeons interested in serving as CoC State Chairs for Mississippi, Puerto Rico, and South Carolina. If you are interested or would like to recommend someone for this position, please contact Kate Phair, MPH, Cancer Liaison Program Administrator at kphair@facs.org.

Role of the Cancer Liaison Physician Web Conference

Join us for the next Web conference to better understand the role and responsibilities of the Cancer Liaison Physician (CLP). All Web conferences are offered on Central Time (CT).

Wednesday, February 8, 2006–4:00pm to 5:00pm
Tuesday, April 4, 2006–9:00am to 10:00am
Thursday, June 8, 2006–5:00pm to 6:00pm

These sessions last approximately 50 minutes and require Internet and telephone access. Registration is NOT necessary. Visit our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/liaison.html> for further instructions. Please direct questions to Carolyn Jones at cjones@facs.org. We look forward to your participation.

Do We Have Your Number?

In an effort to better serve the public, the CoC is working with American Cancer Society (ACS) and the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Cancer Information Service (CIS) to improve the use and functionality of the CoC Hospital Locator on the ACS Web site. This Web-based application assists the public in searching for nearby CoC-approved programs and the resources and services they provide. The CoC Hospital Locator receives more than 10,000 hits per month. In addition, the ACS and CIS answer calls from the public on their cancer information hotlines (1-800-ACS-2345 and 1-800-4-CANCER, respectively) and share information about CoC-approved programs with the public.

In an effort to help the ACS and CIS provide excellent patient service, we ask that all approved programs perform a quality assurance check on the phone number they have provided in CoC Datalinks. The phone number listed in CoC Datalinks should be the main phone number for the cancer center. We appreciate your assistance with this effort.

Access Made Easy: Link to the CoC Hospital Locator

Lead prospective patients directly to your facility information on the American Cancer Society's CoC Hospital Locator. With the help of your facility's Webmaster or Marketing Department, place a link on your own cancer program's (or facility's) Web site that leads patients, family members, or care-givers directly to the resource and services information they seek.

It's simple, find your facility in the CoC Hospital Locator at <http://www.cancer.org>. Click on the link "Services Available" to view information about your facility. Once the Web page showing the services is displayed, copy the URL (Web address) and give it to the person or department personnel responsible for maintaining your facility's Web site. Ask that the URL be prominently displayed to promote your CoC-approved cancer program.

For questions, please contact Carolyn Jones at cjones@facs.org.

Update: Collaborative Staging (CS) Reliability Study

The CoC joins SEER and the AJCC in congratulating the 972 registrars who participated in the CS Reliability Study this past November [587 registrars representing the American College of Surgeons/Commission on Cancer (ACoS/CoC), 241 registrars representing the National Cancer

Institute/Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results Program (NCI-SEER), 44 representing the Centers for Disease Control/National Program of Cancer Registries (CDC/NPCR), 58 representing the National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA), and 42 representing Statistics Canada/Canadian Cancer Registry]. Participants were asked to code CS and complete 12 cancer cases: 3 breast, 3 colon, 3 lung, and 3 prostate. The scenarios used for this study were actual cases submitted by registrars in a "Call for Cases."

The CS Reliability Study is currently in the "reconciliation process." The reconciliation process is a period during which the facilitators from each organization, along with their respective participants, review their cases and prepare a reconciliation document containing discussion on preferred answers, rationales, and citations with recommendations for consideration and action by the CS Steering Committee. Results of the reconciliation may include: changes to the preferred answers, additional clarification to CS manual, and development of additional educational materials.

Presentations on the results of the CS Reliability Study will be given during both the NCRA and the NAACCR annual meetings this year. The final report will be available to the public in electronic format on the CS Web site in July. Also, watch for article(s) in the Journal of Registry Management this summer.

For more information about the CS Reliability Study, please contact Valerie Vesich via e-mail at AJCC@facs.org.

World Cancer Day—February 4, 2006

The International Union Against Cancer (UICC) and its member organizations in over 80 countries are dedicating World Cancer Day 2006 to childhood cancer. Under the slogan "My Child Matters," World Cancer Day will take place on Saturday, February 4, 2006, and focus on early detection and equal access to treatment, as well as celebrate the lives of all children around the world in the fight against childhood cancer. Activities and events include educational programs for parents about early detection of childhood cancer. The UICC will release a report on World Cancer Day, Childhood Cancer: Rising to the Challenge, illustrating that childhood cancer is the second highest cause of death in children; and more than 160,000 children are newly diagnosed with cancer each year around the world. In developing countries, roughly 60% of children with cancer still die of their disease, as opposed to 25% in the developed world. For more information on World Cancer Day, visit the UICC Web site at <http://www.uicc.org>.

NIH Seeks Study Participants

Doctors at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) seek participants for an important Papillary or Follicular Thyroid Cancer study (http://clinicalstudies.info.nih.gov/detail/A_2006-DK-0025.html). Individuals should be recently diagnosed with thyroid cancer and planning to have thyroid surgery or their first radioactive iodine treatment. Doctors at the NIH are testing if the success rate of eliminating all remaining thyroid tissue by a low dose of radiation from radioactive iodine (131-I) can be improved by adding a study medication. All participants will receive careful evaluation and low dose radioactive iodine. One group of patients will receive lithium (the study medication and the other group will receive a placebo (a pill that neither harms nor helps). All study-related tests and medications are provided at no cost.

For information about the study, contact the NIH at 1-800-411-1222 (TTY: 1-866-411-1010), se habla español) or via the Web at <http://clinicaltrials.gov>. The study takes place at the NIH Clinical Center in Bethesda, MD, just nine miles north of Washington, DC, and requires enrollment in the study from beginning to end.

In Remembrance

Oliver H. Beahrs, MD, FACS

The CoC and American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) are saddened to report the passing of Oliver H. Beahrs, MD, FACS on January 7, 2006. Dr. Beahrs is a past-president of the American College of Surgeons (1988-1989) and chair of the College's Board of Regents (1984-1987). He was instrumental in establishing the American College of Surgeons Foundation. Dr. Beahrs was an active member of the Commission serving from 1962 and 1972, and is most remembered for his dedicated service to the AJCC. Dr. Beahrs served as member in the 1970s and provided leadership in the 1980s as executive director for the organization. He was editor of the Second, Third, and Fourth editions of the AJCC Cancer Staging Manual. The Fifth Edition was dedicated in his honor. His contributions to the field of surgery and oncology are numerous and we will miss the kindness, devotion, and deep concern he shared for cancer patients and their families.

Charles R. Smart, MD, FACS

The American College of Surgeons and CoC are saddened to report the passing of Charles R. Smart, MD, FACS on January 28, 2006. Dr. Smart founded the Utah Cancer Registry, a central cancer registry that has served the state of Utah for more than 35 years, and was past president of the Utah Division of the American Cancer Society. Dr. Smart was well-known for his work in establishing computerized cancer registries throughout the country and for establishing early detection guidelines for cancer with the National Cancer Institute. In addition, Dr. Smart was past president of the Utah Chapter of the American College of Surgeons, a branch chief at the National Cancer Institute, and past chairman of the American Cancer Society Breast Cancer Task Force. He will be remembered most for his contributions to the work of the Commission on cancer during his tenure as Medical Director for the Cancer Department from the late 1970s to early 1980s. His contributions to the oncology community were immense and he will be missed.

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 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>.

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