



Commission  
on Cancer

# Flash



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

## January 2007

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### It was a Busy Year for the CoC

We want to call your attention to the new Commission on Cancer logo included in this redesign of the *CoC Flash*. This logo represents a new, modern look for the CoC and yet still maintains the "links" from our previous logo that exemplify the multidisciplinary nature of cancer patient care and the individuals involved in its delivery. We are pleased with our new logo and have begun the transition process of including it on all of our materials as they are worked on during the first half of 2007.

The *2006 Commission on Cancer Year in Review*, which highlights the CoC's accomplishments and initiatives from the past year, is now available. This month-by-month retrospective presents the programs and services provided by the CoC to improve the quality of cancer care at the national, state, and local levels. Much of what the Commission has accomplished is a direct result of its CoC-approved cancer programs and volunteers. The report is available for viewing on our Web page at <http://www.facs.org/cancer>. Printed copies will be mailed to the cancer committee chair, cancer liaison physician, cancer program administrator, and cancer registrar for each CoC-approved cancer program. CoC's members and volunteers will also receive a copy along with a New Year letter reviewing important CoC initiatives. Individuals interested in receiving a printed copy of the *2006 Year in Review* should contact the CoC at [CoC@facs.org](mailto:CoC@facs.org).

### Educational Opportunity for Facilities Providing Cancer Care to Children

Are you part of a general hospital that also provides cancer care to children? Then we encourage you to participate in the Pediatric Survey Savvy Workshop being held on March 23, 2007 in Chicago, IL.

The newly established Pediatric Cancer Program category allows a general hospital to pursue separate evaluation and approval of the pediatric cancer care provided by the facility.

The workshop will include an in-depth review of the standards developed by the CoC for both pediatric hospitals and facilities with a pediatric cancer program component, discussion about the CoC Approvals Process for earning accreditation, and a review of the numerous resources available to the program. A highlight of the workshop will be a report on the first pediatric cancer program component survey presented by staff from the facility that was evaluated.

Make plans to attend this exciting workshop! For more information and a registration form, go to <http://www.facs.org/cancer/schedules/meetcon.html#march>.

## Welcome New State Chairs

Please join the CoC in welcoming the following new State Chairs:

**David Sheldon, MD, FACS, Geisinger Medical Center, Danville, PA**  
**Albert Reed Thompson, MD, FACS, Central Arkansas VA Health System, Little Rock, AR**

## Nominate Your Cancer Liaison Physician—Deadline March 1

The Cancer Liaison Physician (CLP) Awards Program serves to recognize outstanding performers who go above and beyond the regular scope of CLP duties and who have made a positive impact on their cancer program and/or community.

CLPs may be nominated for one of the five following categories:

- Developed and/or implemented an idea(s) that improved the quality of care delivered at his/her facility
- Directly contributed to the approval status of the cancer program
- Worked above and beyond normal CLP expectations to strengthen the cancer program
- Demonstrated leadership and support for cancer control activities in the community and with the ACS
- Served as a role model for other staff and exhibited characteristics that truly made him/her a physician champion for the cancer program

A call for nominations was issued through a special e-mail announcement sent to CoC State Chairs, surveyors, ACS staff, and CoC-approved program staff with nominations due March 1, 2007. Nominations must include a brief description of how the CLP met the criteria for which he/she was nominated and that validates the CLP as a physician champion within the cancer program. If you are eligible to nominate and know a deserving CLP, we encourage you to submit a nomination by March 1 to Carolyn Jones, Cancer Liaison Program Coordinator, at [cjones@facs.org](mailto:cjones@facs.org), by fax (312)202-5009, or by regular mail: 633 N. Saint Clair St., Chicago, IL 60611.

Information and a nomination form are available online at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/liaison.html>. Should you have any questions regarding the nomination process or criteria, please contact Kate Phair, Cancer Liaison Program Administrator, at [kphair@facs.org](mailto:kphair@facs.org).

## Don't Miss the Next "Role of the CLP" Web Conference

Need clarification about the Cancer Liaison Physician's (CLP) role? Have questions about the CLP's responsibilities? Join us for the next Web conference to gain a better understanding of the activities of the CLP. Facilitated by Aaron D. Bleznak, MD, FACS, Pennsylvania State Chair, this is your opportunity to ask questions. The program will provide information on the CoC's activities as well as resources and strategies for CLPs to be effective in their role.

**Tuesday, February 20, 2007—5:00 pm to 6:00 pm Central Standard Time**

Meeting Key: 7054168008333

Audio Dial-in: 1-866-406-3498; Passcode 9707489#

Meeting URL: <http://web.meetme.net/audience>

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.

Additional Web conferences are already scheduled for April and June.

**Wednesday, April 4, 2007–9:00 am to 10:00 am Central Standard Time**  
**Thursday, June 14, 2007–10:00 am to 11:00 am Central Standard Time**

If you can't participate the day of the live Web conference, log on to the CoC's Online Education Center at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/webcast/index.html> and review a one-hour recorded session of this very same talk. This presentation is free of charge and includes synchronized audio, slides, and a written transcript.

## **NCI Cancer Information Service: A Public and Professional Resource**

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is the nation's premier federal agency for cancer research and training, working toward the ultimate goal of reducing the overall burden of cancer. To help achieve its mission, the NCI established the Cancer Information Service (CIS) in 1975 to educate people about cancer—from prevention and early detection through end of life care. CIS operates

an information service; disseminates evidence-based programs, products, and services to the public, health professionals, and partner organizations; and conducts health communications research.

The NCI is largely known for sponsoring clinical trials throughout the country and at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. But many people who turn to the NCI are in need of cancer information and are often searching for quality cancer care close to home. Through the CIS phone and LiveHelp instant-messaging services, tailored cancer information is provided and CIS information specialists frequently refer callers to CoC-approved cancer programs. The American College of Surgeons Fellowship Database is also prominently listed in NCI materials as a resource for patients looking for a physician.

Encourage patients to call the CIS and speak to a trained cancer information specialist to receive the latest, most accurate cancer information. The information specialists provide confidential, reliable, personalized cancer information and publications to all callers.

Health professionals can utilize the CIS and its staff to access a wide range of NCI publications, disease specific treatment summaries, and educational materials on topics such as clinical trials, cancer risk, tobacco control, and cancer statistics. NCI publications are free, but for bulk orders over 20, there is a nominal shipping and handling fee.

For more information about the NCI's Cancer Information Service, please visit <http://www.cancer.gov> or call 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237).

## **NCDB Updates Web-based Reporting Tools**

On January 31, 2007 the NCDB Public Benchmark Reports, Hospital Comparison Benchmark Reports, and Cancer Program Practice Profile Reports (CP<sup>3</sup>R) for Stage III Colon Cancer were updated to include cases diagnosed through 2004.

**NCDB Public Benchmark Reports:** This easy-to-use, public application has been updated and now includes data from seven diagnosis years (1998-2004) and approximately 4.5 million cases. It provides descriptive information on the 11 most frequently diagnosed cancers in the United States. Users can design queries using data aggregated by hospital type (small community, comprehensive community, or academic/teaching centers) or geographic area (state, region, or nation). As many as three co-variables can be selected to define the type of data users wish to review. The companion reporting tool, the NCDB Survival Reports, which allows access to site-specific AJCC stage stratified five-year observed survival rates, has also been updated to include cases diagnosed in 1998 and 1999.

**NCDB Hospital Comparison Benchmark Reports:** Available only to designated cancer program staff and clinicians at CoC-Approved Cancer Programs, these reports contain almost 5 million cases reported by 1,376 CoC-Approved Cancer Programs diagnosed between the years 2000 and 2004.

They also provide information on 60 different types of cancer and can be used to conduct clinical review of patient diagnoses and treatment trends that are necessary to ensure that the quality of care provided to patients can be monitored. Individual hospital data can be compared with that of aggregated data from other CoC-Approved Cancer Programs in the same health care system or selected groups of facilities at the state, regional or national level.

**CP<sup>3</sup>R–Stage III Colon Cancer:** This quarterly update of the Cancer Program Practice Profile Reports (CP<sup>3</sup>R) reflects all data reconciliation efforts by cancer programs based upon review and validation of 1998–2003 Stage III colon cancer case reports. Cases diagnosed in 2004 have been added to the reports, and programs will have the opportunity to review and reconcile these cases in the same manner as those reported for earlier years. During the first week of April, 2004, cases will be incorporated into the calculated weighted average that serve as the core metric for comparison with other cancer programs. These updates continue to facilitate quality improvement efforts at your facility by providing feedback on the quality of patient care, physician charting, and registry operations.

## **New Version of NAACCR Standard Edits Is Available**

The NAACCR edits metafile NACR111 (version 11.1) has been posted and can be downloaded from the NAACCR Web site at <http://www.naacccr.org>. NACR111 is updated for use with cases diagnosed in 2007, incorporating the new National Provider Indicator (NPI) codes and the new ambiguous terminology and multiple primary codes as documented in the "NAACCR 2007 Implementation Guidelines and Recommendations" (see <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/standards.html>). The NACR111 edits also are usable for cases diagnosed prior to 2007.

Registrars who wish to check their current data against the edits that will be used when those cases are submitted to NCDB can find instructions for using the revised edits at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/ncdb/newlyabstracted.html>. The new NACR111 metafile has six edit sets designed specifically for CoC approved facilities and two recommended edit sets that also address CoC data items. The edit sets identified on this Web site will be the source of the NCDB edits for the next Call for Data.

Links from this Web site to the NAACCR site provide spreadsheet information on changes from earlier standard NAACCR metafiles, a spreadsheet that lists all of the edits in each edit set by name, and an omnibus document that describes all 899 edits in the NACR111 metafile.

## **NAACCR 2007 Implementation Guidelines Approved**

The NAACCR Board approved the 2007 Implementation Guidelines and the document is posted on the NAACCR Web site. It can be found under the Standards tab or the Registry Resources tab; a link from the home page will also be available.

If you have questions, please direct them to Frances Ross at [fer@kcr.uky.edu](mailto:fer@kcr.uky.edu).

## **I&R Activity in 2006**

Available to all cancer care professionals, the Inquiry and Response System (I&R) is a repository for thousands of questions and answers related to registry data and cancer program standards developed by the CoC and the American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC). Each year, the CoC uses the I&R to identify opportunities for improving cancer program and data standards. The I&R has been influential in the development, clarification, and revision of the Cancer Programs Standards, new or updated policies and procedures, expanded documentation, clearer communications, and increased education and training resources.

Most recently, the *Journal of Registry Management*, published by the National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA), has featured articles highlighting issues identified by the I&R including: FORDS definitions, CoC Cancer Program Standards, Cancer Program Practice Profile Reports (CP<sup>3</sup>R): Stage III Colon Cancer, and the Electronic Quality Improvement Packets (e-QulP). More articles are scheduled for 2007.

The I&R team, comprised of CoC technical staff, meets weekly to review questions submitted and provide consensus answers. The team also utilizes physician and other expert curators (for example, from SEER, NCI, or NCDB analysts) who specialize in certain fields and provide input and support to the team. During 2006, the I&R team responded to 3,242 queries; the average turnaround time was

9.9 days.

#### Percentage of Questions Asked by Category

- AJCC Stage: 18%
- Cancer Program Standards: 21%
- Collaborative Stage: 14%
- FORDS: 44%
- ICD-O: 8%
- NCDB: 2%
- SEER: 1%
- Other: 1%

The most frequently asked questions within a category (14%) were the case eligibility definitions and parameters related to the *Facility Oncology Registry Data Standards* (FORDS). Specific topics included class of case, date of first contact, date of initial diagnosis, and determining multiple primaries.

We encourage you to submit queries to the I&R. These questions benefit other constituents and provide important feedback to the CoC. To review the I&R database or submit a question, go to <http://web.facs.org/coc/default.htm>.

### Education: A Local or National Event?

Please be advised that Webinars and Web conferences, although sponsored by national organizations such as the CoC and the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries (NAACCR), are compliant with *regional* education related to standard 7.2. This type of activity, however, does not fulfill the commendation requirement for *attending a national* meeting.

### Revised Collaborative Staging Manual Available

The *Collaborative Staging Manual and Coding Instructions*, both Part I and Part II, is available online at <http://www.cancerstaging.org/cstage/manuals.html>. It can be downloaded and saved to your computer for use in daily abstracting. It has been set up so that you can add your own comments and highlight various text on the pages to personalize your copy for ease in use. You can also type in a word or phrase to quickly locate a particular rule. Additional documents are available on this Web page to assist you in maximizing the use of the electronic manual.

If you prefer a printed manual, the National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA) has it available in a hard copy format. You can order it from NCRA's Store at <http://www.ncra-usa.org/store/index.htm#pubs6>. The package includes the CS Manual, Part I and II, printed on heavy weight paper, a three ring binder, a set of dividers, and free USPS Priority Mail shipping. The price is \$85 for NCRA members, and \$125 for non-members. You can buy it online or download an order form.

### AJCC Article on Bone Cancer Staging Published

The AJCC is pleased to announce the publication of the latest article in the series of staging articles in the American Cancer Society's publication, *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians* (November/December 2006 edition). Articles published in *CA* provide up-to-date information on all aspects of cancer prevention, early detection, treatment, palliation, advocacy, quality of life, and more.

The latest article, "Staging of Primary Malignancies," was co-authored by Dr. Michael Simon, Bone Task Force Chair for the AJCC Cancer Staging Manual, Sixth Edition. The article describes TNM staging for bone cancer and includes clinical examples to illustrate the staging process. Download the article at no cost at <http://caonline.amcancersoc.org/cgi/reprint/56/6/366>.

### AJCC Staging Products and Publications Available Online

Springer—your source for all AJCC publications—has developed a new Web site at <http://www.cancerstaging.net> to help you find the staging products you need, quickly and easily. The

site offers other useful features as well. For example, if you need to incorporate a staging form in your EMR, or to customize a staging form, just click on "Copyright Permissions and Licensing" to apply for permission requests quickly and easily online. It can't get much easier than this! Remember <http://www.cancerstaging.net> for all your staging needs.

## Multiple Primary and Histology Coding Rules (MP/H) Online Breeze Webcasting

Registrars can access the MP/H Breeze recorded Webcast training on the SEER Web site at <http://www.seer.cancer.gov/tools/mphrules/training.html>. Accessible anytime of the day, there is no fee and no password or permission is needed to view the sessions.

The first session is an introduction to the rules which teaches the participant how to use the rules and covers all of the general rules. Each of the site-specific rules is presented in two-parts, a lecture and a practicum. To access the cases for the practicum, go to [http://seer.cancer.gov/tools/mphrules/online\\_training.html](http://seer.cancer.gov/tools/mphrules/online_training.html). CEU certificates are made available upon completion of each module.

The introduction to the rules, lung lecture, and practicum are now available. Other site-specific Webcasts will be posted as they are completed.

If you have any questions about the breeze training, please contact Antoinette Percy-Laurry at [percyl@mail.nih.gov](mailto:percyl@mail.nih.gov).

## 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](mailto: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](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>.



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