



Commission  
on Cancer

# Flash



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

**January 2008**

**Highlights for the Month:**

- National Cancer Data Base (NCDB) to Update CP<sup>3</sup>R Reports
- "Revisions to Staging Standard" Video Presentation Available Online
- Use of AJCC "Staging Moments" Exceeds Expectations
- Plan Ahead: "Coming Together 2008: A National Forum on Cancer Care in the US"
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- Learning Made Easy: The Online Education Center
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- Call for Abstracts: CoC Paper Competition
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- Call for Cases: SEER MP/H Coding Reliability Study 2008
- Clarifications Issued for the 2007 MP/H Rules
- Leading Standard Setters Release Clarifications for Coding Embolization
- SEER Offers Workshop on Leukemias, Lymphomas and Head and Neck Cases
- NCI to Hold Forum on Best Practices for Biospecimen Resources
- Join the Fight against Cancer
- Disaster Wallet Card Testing Underway in Gulf Coast States

**National Cancer Data Base (NCDB) to Update CP<sup>3</sup>R Reports**

The Stage III Colon CP<sup>3</sup>R reports will be updated during the second week of February. The reports will be taken off-line Wednesday, February 13, at 5:00pm (CST) in order to recalibrate each program's estimated performance rates based on online data reconciliation performed over the past four months. The updated reports will be available Tuesday, February 19. A special *CoC Flash* announcing their availability will be scheduled. Updates to the CP<sup>3</sup>R reports provide feedback on the quality of patient care, physician charting, and registry operations, and continue to facilitate quality improvement efforts at CoC-accredited cancer programs.

**"Revisions to Staging Standard" Video Presentation Available Online**

For those individuals who were unable to participate in the January 14, 2008, Web conference on "Revisions to the CoC Standard on Staging for 2008," a streaming video version of the program is available online at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/webconf8.html>. We encourage cancer program staff from CoC-accredited cancer programs to familiarize themselves with these changes.

Also, since the changes for 2008 address the utilization of the Collaborative Staging System, a general overview presentation with speaker notes is available on the American Joint Committee on Cancer's (AJCC) Collaborative Staging Education Web page at <http://www.cancerstaging.org/cstage/education.html>. The title of the program is, "Using the Collaborative Staging System for Collecting AJCC TNM Staging." Intended for use by physicians and cancer program staff, this presentation clarifies how registrars use the Collaborative Staging System to collect the data items necessary to electronically derive the AJCC TNM Stage including what Collaborative Staging is, why we use it, and its general principles. Please feel free to download this information and use it to educate your cancer program staff about this important data collection system.

### **Use of AJCC "Staging Moments" Exceeds Expectations**

Staging Moments, an educational series developed by American Joint Committee Cancer (AJCC), is intended to promote physician discussion on the proper and accurate use of the TNM staging schema and follows the common format for a cancer conference to enable its use during those meetings. The downloading of Staging Moments has surged in the last few months with an increase of almost 200 percent. This means the presentations have been downloaded almost 6,000 times since the series was launched in April 2007.

Need help with the new standard on staging for 2008? Staging Moments can be utilized as a teaching tool. The new standard includes a directive to promote and document physician use of AJCC stage in treatment planning. The Staging Moments series not only provides an opportunity for discussion and education on proper staging, but also includes a review of treatment guidelines by stage and details on how the clinical stage can be utilized to determine the treatment plan.

Go to the AJCC Web site at <http://www.cancerstaging.org/staging/index.html> to download any of the three cancer cases each for: breast, colorectal, lung, head & neck, and melanoma. This is a program that many have found useful, and your facility may want to plan on including it at cancer conferences or other venues as part of their educational activities for this year.

### **Plan Ahead: "Coming Together 2008: A National Forum on Cancer Care in the United States"**

**Registration opens March 17, 2008.**

On July 14–15, 2008, in Baltimore, MD, the CoC will host, "Coming Together 2008: A National Forum on Cancer Care in the United States." Join national leaders and advocacy experts in a discussion of legislative and regulatory issues that will affect the future of cancer patient care, and find out how you can contribute to the dialogue and influence the outcome of major policy issues.

Do you want to know....

- What new directions national agencies such as the NCI, FDA, CDC, and others are taking to improve cancer patient care?
- How the health care environment can be changed to improve quality and eliminate disparities in care?
- How leading advocacy organizations are making an impact on national policy?

See our Conference Program online at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/comingtogether2008.html>. Registration opens March 17, 2008. The early bird registration fee is \$425. Limited exhibit space is available.

### **Check Out February Lineup of Web Conferences**

On tap for February are programs related to survey preparation and using the NCDB quality

improvement tool, survival reports. You can watch at your convenience. It's your choice, register and watch the live presentation on the date scheduled OR register and watch the archived video up to 90 days\* later! Either way, the Web conference now fits *your* schedule.

**February 12: Tip Time: Strategies for Successful SAR Completion**

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

**February 26: Navigating and Interpreting the NCDB Survival Reports**

Time: 2:00pm (ET); 1:00pm (CT); 11:00am (PT)

Registration is required. The cost for each individual program is \$35 (credit card payment is required at the time of registration; no checks or PO's accepted).

CME/CE's are available upon completion of the Web conference evaluation form. (Your pop-up blocker must be disabled during the program.)

Upcoming programs will include:

- March 11: Overcoming Barriers to Implementation of TQM/CQI
- May 6: Resolving Issues of Case Eligibility
- June 24: Comparative Reporting: Quality of Care Measures for Breast and Colorectal Cancers
- August 12: Get Ready! Preparing for the NCDB Call for Data

\*Remember, if you missed the live presentation for our January programs, you can still register and purchase access to the streaming video presentation of the programs for three more months!

Visit our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/coceduc.html> for information on registration, program content, and fees. For questions, contact Tracy Rausch at [trausch@facs.org](mailto:trausch@facs.org).

**Learning Made Easy: The Online Education Center**

The Online Education Center for Cancer Programs offers 20 courses related to CoC standards, data, quality improvement, and cancer staging. And five of these programs are completely free! Have you seen the Online Education Center lately?

Earn credit and learn from the comfort of your own home or office. Sessions can be viewed at your own pace; you may start and stop whenever you choose, and you may view the courses as often as you'd like. As a bonus, individuals from CoC-accredited cancer programs receive a 25% discount on the cost of presentations.

Go to <http://www.facs.org/cancer/webcast/index.html> for a complete list of programs and information.

**FORDS 101 Workshop to be Offered at NCRA**

In conjunction with the National Cancer Registrars Association's (NCRA) Annual Educational Conference being held April 28–May 1, 2008, at the Hilton Hotel in Minneapolis, MN, the CoC will present a FORDS 101 Workshop on Monday, April 28, 8:00am–4:00pm. The workshop is designed to educate new and seasoned registrars on coding using the Facility Oncology Registry Data Standards (FORDS) manual. In addition, the workshop will include a review of recent changes and updates and the FORDS relationship to select CoC cancer program standards.

Taught by CoC staff, this workshop is a must for anyone needing a refresher on FORDS, or those who want to be on top of the latest changes. The registration fee is \$200 for NCRA

members and \$250 for non-members. This fee includes all workshop materials, continental breakfast, and box lunch. To register, go to NCRA's conference program online at <http://www.ncra-usa.org>.

### **CoC Hosting Forum for Accredited Cancer Programs During NCRA**

The CoC will host a forum for cancer registrars from CoC-accredited cancer programs on Monday, April 28, from 4:30 to 6:30pm. One registrar from each CoC-accredited cancer program is invited to attend and participate in a dialogue and exchange of information and ideas about their facility's participation in the CoC Approvals Program. An e-mail invitation with registration information will be distributed in mid-February.

### **New State Chairs Appointed**

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

Mitchell Chorost, MD, FACS, VA New York Harbor Healthcare System, Brooklyn, NY  
Theresa Graves, MD, FACS, Rhode Island Hospital, Providence, RI  
Ramon Jimenez, MD, FACS, Hartford Hospital, Hartford, CT  
Barry Landry, MD, FACS, Thibodaux Regional Medical Center, Thibodaux, LA  
Juan Paramo, MD, FACS, Mount Sinai Medical Center, Miami Beach, FL

### **Now Accepting Nominations for Outstanding CLP Award**

Don't miss this opportunity to recognize your Cancer Liaison Physician (CLP) for his/her leadership and contributions to your cancer program! Nominate your CLP for the 2007 Outstanding Performance Award. Nominations must be received by March 31. Cancer program staff, state chairs, surveyors, and American Cancer Society (ACS) staff may nominate a CLP for having displayed excellence in one or more of the following areas in 2007:

- Development and/or implementation of an idea(s) that improved the quality of care delivered at the facility.
- Contributed significantly to the accreditation 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.

Award recipients will be notified by July 1, 2008. The electronic nomination form is available on our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/liaison.html>.

### **Call for Abstracts: CoC Paper Competition**

The deadline to submit abstracts for the 2008 Commission on Cancer Paper Competition is quickly approaching. The competition is open to general surgery residents, surgical specialty residents, sub-specialty residents, and oncology fellows in the United States. The papers should describe original research in cancer care in either: (1) basic laboratory research, (2) clinical investigation, or (3) quality of care/health services research.

Residents or cancer fellows should submit a structured abstract to the CoC by March 15, 2008. CoC state chairs will review the submitted abstracts by region and select a first, second, and third place winner by July 15. The first place winner from each of the 10 regions will move on to a national competition. First, second, and third place winners of the national competition will be selected and notified by August 15, 2008.

First-place winning residents and/or fellows of the national competition will receive a \$1,000

award and present at the CoC Annual Meeting on Sunday, October 12, 2008, in San Francisco, CA. Second place winners will be recognized at the Annual Meeting and receive a \$500 award.

This competition has been funded by the CoC and by a memorial gift from Mrs. A. Lee Campione in honor of her late husband, Matthew P. Campione, MD, FACS.

For information, please log onto our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/cannews.html> or contact the CoC at 312/202-5183 or [cjones@facs.org](mailto:cjones@facs.org).

### **Participate in Role of the CLP Web Conferences in 2008**

Have questions about the Cancer Liaison Physician's (CLP) priorities for 2008? Join us on the next Web conference to better understand the activities of the CLP. Facilitated by a CoC State Chair, this is your opportunity to ask questions.

#### *Schedule:*

Monday, February 11: 8:00–9:00am (CST)  
Wednesday, April 16: 5:00–6:00pm (CST)  
Thursday, June 12: 9:00–10:00am (CST)  
Tuesday, August 5: 4:00–5:00pm (CST)  
Wednesday, October 22: 11:00am– 12pm (CST)  
Thursday, December 4: 5:00–6:00pm (CST)

Registration is NOT necessary. For further instructions, visit our Web site at <http://www.acs.org/cancer/coc/clpwebconferences.html>.

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. Presenter Aaron D. Bleznak, MD, FACS, Vice-chair of the Committee on Cancer Liaison, provides information on the CoC's activities and resources and strategies for CLPs to be effective in their role.

For questions, please contact Carolyn Jones at (312) 202-5183 or [cjones@facs.org](mailto:cjones@facs.org).

### **Report on the Association of Insurance with Cancer Care Utilization and Outcomes**

A recent article published in *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians* (2008;58:9–31), including data from the National Cancer Data Base (NCDB), reports that uninsured cancer patients are less likely to receive recommended cancer screening tests, are more likely to be diagnosed with later stage disease, and have lower survival rates than those with private insurance for several cancers. This study combines data from the National Health Interview Survey (a project of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics) and the NCDB (a joint program of the CoC and the American Cancer Society (ACS) which is a nationwide oncology outcomes database for more than 1,400 CoC-accredited cancer programs in the United States and Puerto Rico). See this [press release](#) for more details.

While advances in the prevention, early detection, and treatment of cancer have resulted in an almost 14 percent decrease in the death rates from all cancers combined from 1991 to 2004 in the overall US population, not all segments of the population have benefited equally from this progress. The authors suggest that a lack of adequate health insurance appears to be a critical barrier to receipt of appropriate health care services, and present data on the association between health insurance status and screening, stage at diagnosis, and survival for breast and colorectal cancer. When reviewing all cancer sites combined, the authors report that patients who were uninsured and those who were Medicaid-insured at the time of diagnosis, were 1.6 times as likely to die in five years as those with private insurance. While the barriers to receipt of optimal cancer care are complex and involve patient-level, provider, and health system factors,

evidence presented in this paper suggests that addressing insurance and cost-related barriers to care is a critical component of efforts to ensure that all Americans are able to share in the progress that can be achieved by access to high-quality cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment services. Go to <http://CAonline.AmCancerSoc.org>, to view the entire article.

Ward E, Halpern H, Schrag N, Cokkinides V, DeSantis C, Bandi P, Seigel R, Stewart A, Jemal A. Association of Insurance with Cancer Care Utilization and Outcomes. *CA Cancer J Clin* 2008;58:9-31.

### **Call for Cases: SEER MP/H Coding Reliability Study 2008**

In preparation for the October 2008 Reliability Study of the 2007 Multiple Primary and Histology Coding rules, SEER seeks de-identified medical records for use in the reliability testing process. Seer asks for your participation in identifying appropriate test cases and providing de-identified copies of specific parts of the medical record. The document is located at [http://seer.cancer.gov/registrars/2008\\_call\\_for\\_cases.html](http://seer.cancer.gov/registrars/2008_call_for_cases.html). Please note that the deadline for submitting cases is Tuesday, February 19, 2008.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact Margaret (Peggy) Adamo, RHIT, CTR, Public Health Analyst, Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) Program at [adamom@mail.nih.gov](mailto:adamom@mail.nih.gov).

### **Clarifications Issued for the 2007 MP/H Rules**

NCI/SEER has developed a list of clarifications for the 2007 MP/H rules based on questions and comments received from registrars. The clarifications include changes in wording, more detailed explanations of select terms, and definitions in common problem areas. Follow this link to access the MP/H Clarifications, <http://seer.cancer.gov/tools/mphrules/download.html>.

### **Leading Standard Setters Release Clarifications for Coding Embolization**

The CoC, in conjunction with NCI's Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program, (SEER) and the CDC's National Program of Cancer Registries (NPCR), has issued a statement that clarifies how embolization should be coded in cancer registries. A distinction is made among embolization that involves chemotherapeutic drugs, embolization with radioactive beads, embolization that blocks the flow of blood to the tumor, and embolization to facilitate surgery. The full statement is available at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/standards.html>.

### **SEER Offers Workshop on Leukemias, Lymphomas and Head and Neck Cases**

SEER will offer, "Leukemia, Lymphoma and Head and Neck Cancers: In Depth." on May 2-3, 2008, at the Minneapolis Hilton Hotel, Grand Ballroom B & C in Minneapolis, MN. Registration for this two-day workshop is open to all registrars. Federal funds are paying for the SEER workshop, so there is no charge to registrars. ALL registrations must be made ONLINE at <http://www.blsmeetings.net/seer2008workshop/>. Please note there are specific dates to register. Seating is limited to 300 participants. For questions, contact Antoinette Percy-Laurry at [percyl@mail.nih.gov](mailto:percyl@mail.nih.gov).

### **NCI to Hold Forum on Best Practices for Biospecimen Resources**

The NCI is holding a series of public forums about the NCI Best Practices for Biospecimen Resources, which offer technical, operational, ethical, legal, and policy principles for biospecimen resources. The purpose of these forums is to educate and obtain feedback about the NCI Best Practices from a broad range of perspectives, including that of investigators, physicians, industry representatives, hospital administrators, cancer survivors, patient advocates, and the general public. The next forum will be held on January 28, 2008 in Seattle, WA, and feature expert presentations and interactive discussions. Attendance is free and open to the public. For more information, visit <http://www.nci-bestpractices-forum.com/>.

### **Join the Fight against Cancer**

Advocacy volunteers are essential to the efforts of the American Cancer Society and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACSCAN) in the fight against cancer. As ACS CAN continues to demonstrate its prowess on Capitol Hill, the organization's ambassadors and their stories have proven to be the keys to working successfully with lawmakers to change and support policies that will make cancer a national priority.

In an effort to attract new volunteers to advocacy and better equip existing volunteers in the fight,

ACS CAN developed an online training module. Though the module is geared toward new volunteers, it is also relevant and useful to other individuals interested in learning more about ACS CAN and advocacy. Key components of the training include background on ACS CAN and its volunteer structure, the organization's policy priorities, and the roles and responsibilities of its volunteers and how volunteers contribute and impact ACS CAN's legislative successes.

The intent of the training is to have users complete the module with a better understanding of advocacy and ACS CAN, what it entails to be an ACS CAN ambassador, and how the elements tie together in our fight to secure investments in research, build public awareness, increase access to care, and improve quality of life for cancer patients, survivors, and their families.

### **Disaster Wallet Card Testing Underway in Gulf Coast States**

In times of natural or national disaster, will you be able to maintain contact with your patients? The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) have developed a wallet card that is being pilot tested with oncologists in the Gulf Coast states. The wallet card guides displaced cancer patients to ASCO's patient information Web site at <http://www.plwc.org>, and the NCI's Cancer Information Service national toll-free number (1-800-4-CANCER), *LiveHelp* instant messaging service, and e-mail service available at <http://www.cancer.gov/help>. Using this nationwide, electronic and telecommunication infrastructure, patients and physicians can access and share important information in the event of a disaster.

An evaluation of the pilot test will help determine whether or not the program is expanded to cover other geographic areas or other potential disasters. Oncology practices in the Gulf States can order copies of the card by calling the NCI's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). Please note, quantities may be limited.

### **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 *CoC Flash* is distributed. Go to <http://www.facs.org/cancer/cocflash/cocflash.html>.

### LEARN and EARN

The CoC's Online Education Center is available 24/7 to support your educational needs. Go to <http://www.facs.org/cancer/webcast/index.html> for more information. CE and CME credits are available.

### SAVE the DATE

CoC to host "Coming Together 2008: A National Forum on Cancer Care in the United States," to be held July 14–15, 2008, in Baltimore, MD.



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