



# CoC Flash

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



July 2003

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- Collaborative Staging (CS) Release Announcement
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## Complimentary Copy of *Cancer Program Standards 2004* Now Available Online

A complimentary copy of the *Cancer Program Standards 2004* manual for CoC-Approved Cancer Programs and constituents is now available online at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/programstandards.html>. Hard copies of the publication will be available in late August for \$30 each. We will announce the availability of the hard copy along with ordering instructions. **No advance orders will be taken.**

Implementation of the *Cancer Program Standards 2004* will be required of all Commission on Cancer (CoC)-approved cancer programs starting on January 1, 2004. This publication replaces all previous cancer program standards-related publications produced by the CoC including: *Standards of the CoC Volume I: Cancer Program Standards*, *Standards of the CoC Volume I (N): Cancer Program Standards*, and *The Complete Guide to Interpreting Cancer Program Standards*. These publications are no longer for sale.

### Manual Format

Each chapter begins with a purpose statement followed by the individual standards. For each standard the following is provided:

- An explanation of the definition and requirement(s) of the standard
- A statement or chart of the specification(s) by category
- A detailed explanation of the documentation required to demonstrate compliance
- A definition of the rating for compliance, non-compliance, or commendation

### Questions

Questions regarding the standards presented in *Cancer Program Standards 2004* should be submitted to the Inquiry and Response System of the CoC at [Inquiry@facs.org](mailto:Inquiry@facs.org). Please reference this publication when sending your question.

## Collaborative Staging (CS) Release Announcement

The Collaborative Stage Task Force is pleased to announce the availability of the Collaborative Staging System information listed below. This information is accessible through a link on the American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) Web site at <http://www.cancerstaging.org>.

- **Collaborative Staging and Coding Manual** - Electronic version now available.
- **Schema-selection Algorithm** - User selects histology and site, then algorithm points to correct schema for use in collaborative staging.
- **List of 94 Site-specific Schema** - The first page of the schema lists all fields to be coded. Then, there are links to each of the individual fields. These fields include the mapping to TNM and summary stages. Any extra tables necessary for the algorithm to calculate T, N, M or stage (AJCC, Summary Stage 1977, Summary Stage 2000) are also supplied.
- **Application Program Interface Documentation for Programmers and Vendors**
- **Known Issues** - If problems in the schemas have been uncovered, they will be listed here as known issues being corrected.

CS implementation is on schedule for cases diagnosed and treated beginning January 1, 2004. This project is a collaborative effort involving the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, AJCC, Canadian Committee for Cancer Staging, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Program of Cancer Registries, National Cancer Institutes Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program, National Cancer Registrars Association, and the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries.

A hard copy of the *Collaborative Staging and Coding Manual* publication will be available from standard-setting organizations in the Fall of 2003.

## Survey Savvy Workshop Scheduled for Spring 2004

The CoC will be holding a Survey Savvy Workshop in Chicago, IL on February 27 and 28, 2004. This two-day workshop is targeted towards administrative, physician, and non-physician staff at CoC-approved cancer programs as well as facilities that are preparing for an initial cancer program survey.

The workshop will provide a comprehensive review of the 36 standards, requirements, and ratings outlined in *Cancer Program Standards 2004*; instruction on using the NCDB Hospital Comparison Benchmark Reports to evaluate quality and outcomes; and an orientation on the use of the new Web-based Survey Application Record (SAR).

Details about course registration will be available in upcoming issues of *CoC Flash* and on the CoC Web site.

## CoC Web Site URLs Changing on August 1, 2003

Have you noticed that we've provided very few Web site addresses in this issue of CoC Flash? On August 1, 2003 the American College of Surgeons is reorganizing the URLs within its Web site. This reorganization will shorten the length of our current URLs and make it easier to navigate the site. As a result of the reorganization, the bookmarks you may have saved for Cancer Programs or CoC pages will be outdated. Please update your bookmark file as of August 1. The URL for the ACoS is still <http://www.facs.org>.

## NCDB Call for Data Information

Specifications for the NCDB Call for Data for accession years 2002, 1997, 1992 and 1987 will be posted on the NCDB Web site by August 8, 2003. The NCDB EDITS Metafile will be posted by August 29, 2003. Submissions will be accepted online beginning November 3, 2003. Data for all years must be converted to *FORDS* form prior to submission, and only NAACCR layout version 10 can be accepted for this submission. Because of the changes in layout and edit requirements that accompany the conversion, registrars and software providers are encouraged to review all data submission information early in their preparation for submission. Documentation and specifications relevant to the NCDB Call for Data will be posted under the "Information for Registrars" and "Information for Software Providers" buttons on the NCDB menu of the CoC Web site as they become available. A written communication to the registries of CoC-Approved Cancer Programs providing further details for the NCDB's Annual Call for Data will be forthcoming in September.

## Requests for Speakers

At this time, the CoC's Speakers Bureau is no longer accepting requests for CoC-trained speakers to make presentations at meetings in September 2003. Availability for October is limited as well, so organizations wishing to secure a speaker for October should submit a speaker request form by early August. See the Education Activities section of our Web site for details.

## Narrative Section in FIPS Offers Personal Touch

The CoC recently announced that a facility can share more information about its cancer program that is not currently captured in the Resources and Services section of FIPS. The new section appears in the "Caseload" section of FIPS (Cases Reported to the NCDB by Site and Stage), and allows each facility to provide the public with a narrative profile of the cancer program and cancer case experience.

This section has been added as a result of feedback from FIPS users. The CoC believes this additional information about cancer programs will educate and help the public to better understand what individual cancer programs have to offer. To date, 96 CoC-approved cancer programs have taken advantage of this benefit. We encourage all facilities to access this page and complete the narrative profile, if not already done, in order to enhance the interpretation of the data currently displayed. For questions and information, please contact [FIPS@facs.org](mailto:FIPS@facs.org).

## CoC Meetings During the ACoS Clinical Congress

### Clinical Congress

October 19 - 23, 2002  
Hilton Chicago & Towers  
Chicago, IL

### Commission on Cancer Annual Meeting

Sunday, October 19, 2003  
2:30 - 4:30 pm  
Continental A - Lobby Level

### Commission on Cancer Reception

Sunday, October 19, 2003  
4:30 - 6:00 pm  
Waldorf Room - 3rd floor

### Cancer Liaison Program Meeting

Monday, October 20, 2003  
7:00 - 9:00 am  
Continental A - Lobby Level

### Commission on Cancer Oncology Lecture: Preemption of Malignant Expression: The Role of the Surgical Oncologist

Presenter: Andrew C. von Eschenbach, MD, FACS, Director, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD  
Wednesday, October 22, 2003  
11:00 am - 12:15 pm  
Lakeside Center - McCormick Place

## Cancer Liaison Physician Reappointment Letters

Reappointment letters were recently mailed out to cancer registrars for cancer liaison physicians whose terms expired in July 2003. We urge cancer registrars to pay close attention to these letters as we are asking for a timely response. The cancer committee is responsible for making the decision regarding reappointment or replacement of the cancer liaison physician. If reappointment is approved, simply fill out the reappointment form and return it. If a replacement is recommended, please complete and return both the Reappointment Form and the Membership Application. Cancer Liaison Physicians are appointed for three-year terms, so only institutions with cancer liaison physicians who were appointed in July 2000 will have received a reappointment notice. Please contact Iris Velazquez with questions you may have at [ivelazquez@facs.org](mailto:ivelazquez@facs.org) or by phone at 312-202-5287.

## Spotlight on CoC Member Organizations: American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine

The American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHMP) is an organization of physicians and other medical professionals dedicated to excellence in palliative medicine through prevention and relief of suffering for patients and families. The organization provides education and clinical practice standards, fosters research, facilitates personal and professional development of its members, and participates in public policy advocacy. AAHMP has been a member organization of the Commission on Cancer since 1996. It is currently represented by Janet L. Abraham, MD, with the Adult Psychosocial Oncology Program at Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, MA.

Hospice is the form of palliative care most cancer patients and their families receive. However,

palliative care consultations are becoming increasingly available for cancer patients in the outpatient and acute inpatient settings as well as in extended care facilities.

Educational programs offered by AAHPM include an annual conference, an Advanced Palliative Care and Review Course, palliative care for hospice medical directors, and palliative care for nursing home medical directors. The *Journal of Palliative Medicine* is the official journal of AAHPM. Additional publications include the AAHPM Bulletin, an eight volume set focused on Hospice and Palliative Care Training for Physicians, a Pocket Guide to Hospital/Palliative Care, and a Primer of Palliative Care. For more information about the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine visit their Web site at <http://www.aahpm.org>.

### **Benefit of Being An Approved Program**

You'll be given Approved Cancer Program Performance Reports that will allow you to compare your mandatory standard ratings with other approved programs in your state and approval award category to identify quality improvement initiatives.

### **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 reducing the morbidity and mortality of cancer through education, standard setting, and monitoring the quality of care. CoC Flash is a monthly news service for constituents of the CoC provided by the Commission and the Cancer Programs section of the American College of Surgeons.

The logo for CoC Flash, featuring the text "CoC Flash" in a white, bold, sans-serif font against a dark blue background.