



CoC Flash

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



July 2005

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"TNM Staging of Cancer of the Head and Neck: Striving for Uniformity Among Diversity"

Don't miss the July 1 issue of *Cancer* published by the American Cancer Society. In this issue you'll find another informative article in the AJCC TNM staging series entitled, "TNM Staging of Cancer of the Head and Neck: Striving for Uniformity Among Diversity," by Jatin P. Shah, MD and Snehal G. Patel, MD. This article highlights the complexities involved in developing a user-friendly staging system and presents the major changes found in the *AJCC Cancer Staging Manual*, 6th Edition. The authors also discuss some areas of current interest that may have the potential to lead to future modifications. A CME quiz is included. For full article see *Cancer*, Vol. 55, Issue 4.

Reminder: Don't Forget to Submit Your NCDB Corrections

CoC-Approved Cancer Programs that have NCDB data corrections to return are reminded that the deadline is drawing near. To receive a Compliant (1) rating for Standard 3.7, facilities must submit their 2003 case corrections to the NCDB by **September 1, 2005**. Please direct questions to Nancy Etzold via e-mail at NCDB@facs.org or by phone 312/202-5339.

August 31 Deadline for FIPS Level II Data

In an effort to share the most accurate and timely information with the public through the ACS Web site, the deadline for CoC-Approved Cancer Programs to release FIPS Level II data is **August 31, 2005**. As you know, consumers are becoming more involved in their cancer care. For this reason, the CoC and ACS have teamed up to help provide patients with critical information to make educated care decisions. Work with us to provide the essential information cancer patients and caregivers need; share your facility's Level II data now.

NCI SEER Multiple Primary and Histology Coding Rules Initiative

Planning efforts for implementation of the new NCI SEER Multiple Primary and Histology Coding

Rules have brought greater recognition of the complexities and impact on registry operations that are associated with system changes. Barring unforeseen challenges, the NCI and CDC anticipate recommending full implementation for cases diagnosed in 2007, and the CoC will coordinate its plans with them.

To assure a more smooth transition for the entire cancer surveillance community, the NCI SEER Program has announced plans for a 2006 field trial of material produced under the aegis of the Multiple Primary and Histology Coding Rules Project. Results of the field trial will be used to refine proposed rules and their implementation within registry operations. The study design will include use of new data items, coding and consolidation of a sample of cases based on the proposed rules, and comparison to results with those based on current rules. The protocol-defined field trial will be implemented by selected central and hospital registries.

Register Now for November Survey Savvy Workshop

Registration is underway for the November 14-15, 2005, Survey Savvy Workshop being held at the Wyndham Hotel in the American College of Surgeons headquarters building in downtown Chicago.

The registration fee is \$300 and space is limited to the first 150 registrants. To register, complete and submit the registration form found in the brochure recently mailed to hospital cancer programs or use the form found online at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/surveysavvy.html>. All registration forms must be mailed, no faxes, and payment is required at the time of registration. Please do not make travel or hotel arrangements until you have received your confirmation.

CoC Meetings to be Held in October in Conjunction with Clinical Congress

Invitations to the October 16 and 17 CoC meetings being held in conjunction with the American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress in San Francisco, were sent via e-mail in early July to CoC members, disease site team (DST) members, state chairs, surveyors, cancer liaison physicians, and cancer committee chairs. The invitations included a letter along with an attached PDF file containing a meeting schedule. Please complete and fax the meeting schedule form to Mary Ann Marts at 312/202-5009. The deadline for return is September 16, 2005.

If you are in one of these groups and did not receive an invitation, or have questions about the meetings, please contact Mary Ann Marts at mmarts@facs.org.

Four New Products and Publications Available from the AJCC and CoC

AJCC Patient Brochure: Cancer Staging—What You Need to Know

A new patient education brochure is available from the AJCC. This informative brochure is designed to educate patients, families, friends, and caregivers on cancer staging and the TNM system. It also provides useful information on the most commonly staged cancers and patient resources for cancer information. Available in both English and Spanish.

Cancer Staging—What You Need to Know

Single copy: Free (English or Spanish)

Additional: .50 each

Quantities: 50 copies—\$20.00

100 copies—\$40.00

Cancer Staging Poster Series

The Cancer Staging Poster Series is a seven poster set based on the AJCC *Cancer Staging Manual*, 6th Edition and includes the TNM classification, stage grouping, and anatomic drawings for the following disease sites: *breast, melanoma, lung, cervix, pancreas, prostate, colon and rectum*. The 17 x 22 inch, four-color, smudge-resistant posters are useful teaching and reference aids that can be displayed in physician offices, dictation areas, pathology departments, cancer registries, and at tumor board and cancer conferences.

Cancer Staging Poster Series—\$10.00 per set (available only in set).

Attention CoC-Approved Cancer Programs—A complimentary copy of each of these AJCC

products will be arriving at your program soon!

Survey Savvy on CD-ROM

This electronic version of *Survey Savvy: An Essential Workshop for Cancer Programs Committed to Providing High-Quality Care* is intended for key members of the cancer program team including: cancer program administrators, cancer committee chairs, cancer liaison physicians, cancer registrars, and oncology nurses. After viewing the CD, you will understand the definition, requirement, and rating for each standard set forth by the Commission on Cancer in the *Cancer Program Standards 2004* manual; be able to accurately assess and rate your cancer program's compliance with each standard; and discover strategies to ensure a successful cancer program survey including 45 sample best practices! CME's and CE's are also available.

Survey Savvy on CD-ROM—\$150.00 each

These three products can be ordered online. Go to the American College of Surgeons Publications and Services catalog at <http://www.facs.org/commerce/2004/catsplash.html> or call Order Fulfillment at 312/202-5474.

Updated Condensed Surgical Cancer Summary Checklist

An updated version of the *Condensed Surgical Cancer Summary Checklist* is now available on our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/caprotocol.doc.pdf>. Originally designed for surveyor use to evaluate compliance with standard 4.6, the publication is also a tool that can be used by cancer programs staff during the quality control review of pathology reports.

The publication provides a listing of the scientifically validated data items related to the site or histology-specific protocols that each CoC-approved program must include in the cancer-related pathology reports. Information for the newly developed Primitive Neuroectodermal Tumor (PNET)/Ewing Sarcoma (EW) protocol is included.

Information About this Fall's NCDB Call for Data Available Now

This fall's NCDB Call for Data for submission years 1989, 1994, 1999 and 2004 will not begin until October 3; however, preliminary information has already been posted online. The Case Submission Transmission File Specifications and Format, which describes the cases and items requested, is available at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/ncdb/softwareproviders.html>. The same site has a copy of the NCDB10E edits metafile that will be implemented beginning October 3, and a copy of a slide show presented in an NCDB Web conference for software providers held in May to help them prepare for the call. See <http://www.facs.org/cancer/ncdb/registrars.html> for Interpreting NCDB Edit Reports, which describes all edits in the NCDB10E metafile.

A Call for Success Stories

We'd like to hear from you! Does your facility have a cancer liaison physician (CLP) that goes above and beyond his/her call of duty? Submit your CLP success story and identify what made your CLP a *physician champion* at your facility. Or, are you a CLP with an inspirational experience that you'd like to share? These submissions will be featured as best practices and tips for your colleagues in future issues of the *CoC Flash*, *NewsCLiPs*, and on the Cancer Liaison Program Web pages. Please send information to Kate Phair at kphair@facs.org.

Web Conferences 2005: Role of the Cancer Liaison Physician

Join us for the next Web conference to better understand the role of the cancer liaison physician. All Web conferences are offered on Central Time (CT).

Tuesday, August 9, 2005—8:00am to 9:00am

Facilitator: Christopher Pezzi, MD, Pennsylvania State Chair

Wednesday, October 12, 2005—5:00pm to 6:00pm

Facilitator: Richard Anderson, MD, Illinois State Chair

Thursday, December 8, 2005—9:00am to 10:00am

Facilitator: John Gibbs, MD, New York State Chair

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.

Coding Implications for Changes to Class of Case 0 Requirements in 2006

Members of the CoC recently voted to change two requirements regarding the coding of Class of Case 0 cancer patients at CoC-Approved Cancer Programs beginning with cases diagnosed in 2006.

Physicians in CoC-Approved Cancer Programs will no longer be required to provide an AJCC stage for disease in Class of Case 0 patients.

This means that surveyors will not review Class of Case 0 records when they check that the appropriate physician has staged or reviewed the staging for at least 90% of analytic patients.

Registrars in CoC-Approved Cancer Programs will no longer be required to provide lifetime follow-up for Class of Case 0 patients.

This means that the formula used by approved programs to determine follow-up rates will exclude Class of Case 0 patients from the numerator and denominator.

Class of Case 0 patients (patients diagnosed by the facility who receive all of their first course treatment elsewhere) will continue to be analytic in the sense that CoC-Approved Cancer Programs must abstract those cases and submit data for those cases in accordance with the NCDB Calls for Data. There will be *no* changes in data definitions or standard edits for Class of Case 0 patients resulting from the modifications to the staging and follow-up requirements.

The modified rules will be published in an updated CoC Cancer Program Standards document this fall. A memo was sent to software providers in July that described the software implications of the changes. The full memo, including specific coding guidelines for Class of Case 0 patients, is available at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/ncdb/index.html>.

A Cancer Planning Resource: CancerPlan.org

In response to the nationwide interest and momentum around the concept of comprehensive cancer control (CCC), the American Cancer Society, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) have been working collaboratively to launch the first phase of CancerPlan.org, a new Web site developed to support cancer control planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts.

Well-developed and implemented plans can significantly reduce the impact of cancer on a population. CancerPlan.org was developed to help connect states, tribes, territories and communities through a collaborative, online working and learning environment. The site will facilitate the sharing of data, promising practices, strategies, tactics and resources that exist for use in the development and implementation of comprehensive cancer control plans.

This initial version of the Web site includes the following:

- Comprehensive Cancer Control Planning Resources—national planning, implementation, and evaluation resources, tools and links; as well as state, tribe, and territory practice information
- Cancer Plans and Resources—state-specific comprehensive cancer control plans, resources, tools and links, including preloaded content from across the nation
- Message Board—a communications forum to facilitate seeking or sharing information with other stakeholders

Following a three-month introductory phase, the Web site will be enhanced and re-launched in October 2005.

CoC Survey of Approved Cancer Programs

During May and June, the CoC surveyed cancer registrars at its approved cancer programs to determine usage patterns of the Web applications made available to them through CoC Datalinks. Three hundred twenty-eight or 23 percent of the 1,425 CoC-Approved Cancer Programs responded. Of the 328 respondents, the following information was collected:

- 36 percent accessed CoC Datalinks as needed; 30% monthly; and 23% weekly

- 49 percent updated their FIPS information as needed; 34% annually
- 56 percent utilized the NCDB benchmark reports two or more times a year; 23 percent quarterly
- 90 percent intend to use the SAR to track cancer program activity on an ongoing basis
- 94 percent understand the difference between the SAR and FIPS applications; 59 percent understood that changes made in FIPS transfer to SAR and vice versa
- 96 percent supported the merging of FIPS and SAR so that programs only need to maintain one application
- 96 percent supported the ability to access archived SAR data from previous surveys and annual updates

In response to these data, the CoC is currently making several upgrades to CoC Datalinks to improve its utility for CoC-Approved Cancer Programs. By 2006, the SAR will be open all the time for use as a cancer program activity tracking tool; FIPS and SAR will be combined so programs will only need to access and update one application; programs will have access to their previous survey and annual update records; and the NCDB Hospital Comparison Benchmark Reports will be updated with 2002 and 2003 data.

We thank those cancer registrars who took the time to complete the survey and provide feedback to the CoC so that we can continue to enhance our ability to successfully interact with participating programs.

Spotlight on CoC Member Organization: National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN)

The CoC congratulates the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) on becoming the newest Commission on Cancer Member Organization. The current representative is William T. McGivney, PhD, with the NCCN in Jenkintown, PA.

The NCCN, an alliance of 19 of the world's leading cancer centers, is an authoritative source of information to help patients and health professionals make informed decisions about cancer care. Through the collective expertise of its member institutions, the NCCN develops, updates, and disseminates a complete library of clinical practice guidelines. These guidelines are the standard for clinical policy in oncology. NCCN programs emphasize improvement in the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of oncology practice. Programs include:

- NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology™
- Treatment Guidelines for Patients
- Oncology Outcomes Project
- NCCN Drugs and Biologics Compendium™
- Leukemia Resource Line
- Clinical Trials Network
- Educational Conferences and Symposia for Clinicians
- The Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network
- Other Educational Materials
- Collaborations with managed care organizations

We invite you to learn more about the NCCN and its programs by visiting its Web site at <http://www.nccn.org>.

Did You Know...

Did you know a CoC-Approved Cancer Program is able to add up to seven additional CoC Datalinks users for its facility? Datalinks users have access to confidential facility information related to the National Cancer Database (NCDB), Facility Information Profile System (FIPS), and the Survey Application Record (SAR).

To add a user, see the user agreement and form available on the Cancer Programs page of the College Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/index.html>. The form must be printed and completed on facility letterhead and requires the signature of the cancer program administrator or cancer committee chair. Fax the form to 312/202-5009. Please allow 24 hours to receive a User ID and Password via e-mail. To avoid a processing delay, please print legibly. If you do not receive a User ID and Password within 24 hours, please contact Bridgett Martin via e-mail at bmartin@facs.org for an immediate response.

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 reducing the morbidity and mortality of cancer through education, standard setting, and the monitoring of 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>.

The logo for CoC Flash, featuring the text "CoC Flash" in a bold, italicized, sans-serif font. The "CoC" is in a larger font size than "Flash". The logo is positioned on the right side of a blue horizontal bar that spans the width of the page.

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