



CoC Flash

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



June 2006

Highlights for the Month:

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CoC Conference Highlights Collaborative Efforts to Improve Cancer Care

The response to the CoC's conference—The CoC 2006 and Beyond: Measuring the Quality of Your Cancer Care—was overwhelmingly positive. With more than 300 participants, this two-day conference opened with an insightful and thought-provoking keynote address by Rodger Winn, MD, director of the Quality Measures Project at the National Quality Forum in Washington DC. Following his remarks, 37 presentations delivered information on the full scope of cancer patient care—from diagnosis to survivorship—and the need for improving the quality of care using information currently available through the National Cancer Data Base, clinical trials, and a host of government and not-for-profit organizations that collect and analyze quality indicators.

Presenters came from a variety of organizations—the National Cancer Institute, Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, Coalition of Cancer Cooperative Groups, National Comprehensive Cancer Network, Children's Oncology Group, National Committee for Quality Assurance, American Cancer Society, and the Lance Armstrong Foundation—and from academic settings from around the country. This dynamic diversity exemplifies the CoC's continued dedication to and involvement in helping to improve the quality of cancer care at the national level.

Don't Forget to Submit NCDB Corrections

CoC-approved cancer programs that have NCDB data corrections to return are reminded that the deadline for their submission is drawing near. To receive a (1) Compliance rating for Standard 3.7, facilities must submit their 2004 case corrections to the NCDB by September 1, 2006. We strongly encourage programs to act now and avoid the last-minute rush. Please direct questions to Nancy Etzold via e-mail at NCDB@facs.org or by phone at (312) 202-5339.

SAR Annual Update Changed for 2006

The SAR Annual Update period is normally scheduled for the period from July 1 through September 30. In the past, programs were asked to enter program activities and resources in specific areas of the SAR during the SAR Annual Update period.

Beginning in early September 2006, the CoC plans to open the entire SAR application to all facilities regardless of the schedule for their next survey. This change will enable the cancer program staff at each facility to record program activity and resources from 2004 through 2006 in all areas of the SAR and begin to use the SAR as an ongoing tracking tool for monitoring and recording this information.

The SAR application will remain open for revision between surveys and will close for approximately 12 weeks following the survey until the approval award is determined.

Additional information about this process will be included in future issues of CoC Flash and shared by e-mail notification to CoC Datalinks users.

Invitations to CoC Meetings at Clinical Congress Have Been Sent

Please be advised that invitations to CoC meetings regularly held in conjunction with the ACoS Clinical Congress have been e-mailed to all CoC members, Disease Site Team Leaders, Cancer Liaison Program State Chairs, Cancer Liaison Physicians, and Surveyors. If you are included in one of these groups and did not receive your invitation, please contact Mary Ann Marts at mmarts@facs.org.

Mark Your Calendar: Survey Savvy

This isn't the same old Survey Savvy. Our new program, Survey Savvy: Beyond Compliance, reflects current standards and information set forth in Cancer Program Standards 2004, Revised Edition, and will focus on using and customizing best practice examples to go beyond basic compliance with the CoC standards.

When: Monday and Tuesday, December 4 and 5, 2006

Where: InterContinental Hotel Chicago, 505 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL

Fee: \$400

This program is intended for Cancer Program Administrators, Cancer Committee Chairs, Cancer Liaison Physicians, Cancer Registrars, and other members of the multidisciplinary team.

Future announcements will appear in *CoC Flash*, and details regarding the course and registration will be posted on the CoC's Web site in coming weeks. Space is strictly limited to 150 people. Registration will be on a first come, first-served basis. Payment will be required at the time of registration. No exceptions and no walk-in registrations. Please do not make travel or hotel arrangements until you have received written confirmation of your registration from the CoC.

New AJCC Staff

The American Joint Committee on Cancer is pleased to announce the appointment of Donna M. Gress, RHIT, CTR, to the position of technical specialist. Donna comes to the AJCC from South Coast Medical Center in Laguna Beach, CA, where she was responsible for the management of the cancer registry. Donna has more than 20 years of cancer registry experience as a certified cancer registrar. She also has extensive experience in training and education, developing and delivering presentations on both TNM and Collaborative Staging, and is a past-president of the National Cancer Registrars Association. Donna will be responsible for the management of the Collaborative Staging System and will be involved in the preparation of the *AJCC Cancer Staging Manual, Seventh Edition*. Donna can be reached at 312/202-5410, or via e-mail at dgress@facs.org.

Former CoC Chair Appointed Acting Director of the NCI

On May 31, 2006, Andrew von Eschenbach, MD, FACS, submitted his resignation as director of

the National Cancer Institute (NCI), effective June 10, 2006. He will continue to serve as acting FDA commissioner and as a senior advisor to Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt while he awaits confirmation. John E. Niederhuber, MD, FACS, has been designated acting director of the NCI effective immediately upon Dr. von Eschenbach's resignation.

A distinguished surgeon and researcher with strong ties over many years to the National Cancer Institute as an outside advisor and grant reviewer, Dr. Niederhuber became the NCI's deputy director for Translational and Clinical Sciences in September 2005. Just prior to his recruitment to NCI, he chaired the National Cancer Advisory Board. His extensive academic and research career in the cancer field included positions at the University of Michigan, Johns Hopkins University, and Stanford University before his most recent position at the University of Wisconsin, where he was Director of the University's Comprehensive Cancer Center. Dr. Niederhuber has been a Fellow of the College since 1976, and has served on the Committee for the Forum on Fundamental Surgical Problems. He has also held leadership positions on the Commission on Cancer, serving as its vice-chair from 1988 to 1989 and as chair from 1989 to 1990. For more information, visit <http://www.cancer.gov/aboutnci/acting-director-appointed>.

Prepare Yourself for the Fall 2006 CTR Exam

Get ready! Two national organizations are offering courses this summer.

NAACCR Readiness Institute

The North American Association for Central Cancer Registries (NAACCR) will offer a certified tumor registrar (CTR) exam readiness institute on August 15–16, 2006, at the Willis Conference Center in Nashville, TN. The purpose of this institute is to prepare eligible candidates for taking the CTR exam. Topics covered include: cancer registry organization and operation; anatomy, physiology, and histology; abstracting and coding; ICD-O-3; Collaborative Staging and AJCC Cancer Staging, 6th Edition; statistics and epidemiology; and computer principles.

The registration form, agenda, goals, and hotel information are posted on the NAACCR Web site at <http://www.naacccr.org>. Link to the information from the home page under "Training." The registration deadline is July 21, 2006.

If you have any questions about this or other NAACCR training opportunities, please contact Shannon Vann, CTR, at svann@naaccr.org or (315) 682-6543.

NCRA Prep Workshop

The National Cancer Registrars Association will offer a certified tumor registrar (CTR) exam preparation workshop on July 29–30, 2006 in Alexandria, VA. This two-day workshop is designed to prepare Cancer Registry professionals for the CTR Exam. The instructors, Donna Gress, RHIT, CTR and Carol Shultz, RHIT, CTR, have developed an agenda that provides a comprehensive and thorough review of all exam topics as well as designated time throughout the program to address registrants' questions.

Register today. This will be the NCRA's final workshop held prior to the fall CTR Exam. For more information go to <http://www.ncra-usa.org/education/index.htm>. The fee is \$260 member, \$295 non-member.

Spotlight on CoC Member Organization: National Consortium of Breast Centers, Inc. (NCBC)

The CoC congratulates the National Consortium of Breast Centers, Inc. (NCBC) for becoming the newest CoC member organization. The selection of their current representative is pending.

In 1985, what began as a small group of professionals from a variety of related disciplines, all involved in breast health care, has grown into an ever-increasing group of professionals who get together to exchange information, network, and learn from each other. Membership currently includes breast health professionals who provide direct patient care and corporations and businesses that provide services or products to breast health professionals and their organizations.

The mission of the NCBC is to promote excellence in breast health care for the general public through a network of diverse professionals dedicated to the active exchange of ideas and resources. It's focus is on the development, implementation, and expansion of breast center programs to allow professionals to be informed of the most up-to-date breast care techniques and options available to their patients. With the addition of private sector businesses and corporations as part of the membership, breast health professionals are also kept informed about advances in equipment, technology, drugs and services available to them to improve patient care. Through monthly newsletters, an annual conference, and networking throughout the year, NCBC members are kept apprised of the continually changing breast health care environment.

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

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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