



CoC Flash

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



March 2004

Highlights for the Month:

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- Don't Miss CoC Presentations at the NCRA Annual Conference
- CoC Special Studies Update
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- Two Roles, Two People: Cancer Committee Chairs and Cancer Liaison Physicians
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Congratulations! National Cancer Registrars Week April 5-9, 2004

The Commission on Cancer and the American Joint Committee on Cancer congratulate cancer registrars for their ongoing commitment to improving the quality of cancer data collection and the quality of patient care. The role of the cancer registrar is multi-faceted and challenging, but increasingly important to cancer patients and their families. We commend you for the truly important work you do and congratulate you on a job well done.

Don't Miss CoC Presentations at the NCRA Annual Conference

Cancer registrars and health care professionals attending the National Cancer Registrars Association Annual Conference, April 20-23, 2004 in Portland, Oregon, are encouraged to attend CoC and AJCC presentations focusing on quality and improving cancer program and patient care. The afternoon plenary session on Wednesday, April 21 will include the following presentations:

CoC - Monitoring the Quality of Cancer Care
Positioning Your Cancer Program in the 21st Century
Transitioning into the New Survey Process
Community Outreach and Cancer Care: The Changing Role of the Cancer Liaison Physician
American Joint Committee on Cancer Update

The CoC and AJCC will also be represented on the Standard-Setters Panel scheduled for Friday morning, April 23. The CoC presentation will focus on new initiatives to improve the quality of cancer care and the AJCC presentation will discuss new initiatives in support of the Collaborative Staging System.

The CoC and AJCC will have exhibit booths at the meeting and invite attendees to come by and visit to see what we have to offer. Cancer Programs staff look forward to seeing you there.

For conference registration information, contact the NCRA or visit their Web site at <http://www.ncra-usa.org>.

CoC Special Studies Update

Breast

The CoC and NCDB would like to thank those facilities that participated in the study "Outcomes of the 1998 Early Stage Breast Cancer PCE: Margin Width as a Determinant of Recurrence/Mortality in Patients with Breast Conserving Surgery." The study is now closed, and approximately 98% of solicited facilities responded with complete data. We will share these data with our Breast Disease Site team to analyze recurrence rates and to draw conclusions. We appreciate your efforts and look forward to sharing our findings with you later this year.

Rectal

The deadline for the study "Local Excision for Rectal Cancer: Trends and Outcomes" has been extended to April 16, 2004. To date, 20% of solicited facilities have responded to the study. Thank you for your prompt response.

Prostate

The deadline for the study "Assessments and Comparisons of Quality of Care Criteria for Localized Prostate Cancer between Black and White Men" has also been extended to May 14, 2004. We look forward to receiving the cases from CoC-Approved Cancer Programs.

Should you have any questions about the studies, please e-mail us at NCDB@facs.org.

Additional Webconferences Scheduled to Present Role of the Cancer Liaison Physician

JOIN US for our next Webconference to better understand the role of the Cancer Liaison Physician. This presentation is open to any cancer program staff interested in learning about the responsibilities of the Cancer Liaison Physician as the designated Community Outreach Coordinator.

New Dates:

Tuesday, April 13, 2004: 4:00 to 5:00 pm (CST)
Thursday, May 19, 2004: 9:00 to 10:00 am (CST)
Wednesday, June 16, 2004: 10:00 to 11:00 am (CST)

Each session lasts approximately 50 minutes and requires participants to have Internet and telephone access. No registration is necessary. **PLEASE NOTE: DIAL-IN** information has changed! See our Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/liaison.html> for a **new telephone number and passcode** provided in the Webconference instructions.

Please direct inquiries to Kate Phair, Cancer Liaison Program Administrator, at kphair@facs.org. We look forward to your participation.

Two Roles, Two People: Cancer Committee Chair and Cancer Liaison Physician

The importance of the CLP role in the cancer program has been elevated and clearly delineated from that of the Cancer Committee Chair. With this, a clear definition of the tasks and activities for which the CLP is accountable has also been developed. In conjunction with the cancer committee, the community services department, and volunteer agencies in the community, the CLP develops goals for the community outreach program. These goals include the provision of support services and prevention and early detection programs by partnering with the volunteer agencies in the community such as the American Cancer Society. Such partnerships result in the accomplishment of community outreach and the use of NCDB data to improve the quality of care within the facility. **Because of these changes and added responsibilities, the CoC recommends that a physician other than the Cancer Committee Chair (CCC) coordinate these activities.**

If your facility has been identified as an approved program for which the CCC currently serves as the CLP, you were sent a recommendation to separate these roles. Having separate individuals serve in these roles promotes teamwork among committee members and ensures continuity in a time of staff transition. We ask that you and the cancer committee review, in detail, the new role of the CLP as well as that of the CCC in the *Cancer Program Standards 2004*, and consider making this change by the time of your next survey.

For questions, please contact Kate Phair at kphair@facs.org or 312-202-5529.

The Role of the CLP: Past versus Present

The CoC has received inquiries regarding the new responsibilities of the Cancer Liaison Physician (CLP). The new CoC standards outline the role of the CLP as the Community Outreach Coordinator, and at most facilities, this responsibility is handled by one individual. However, we recognize that large

facilities, facilities with multiple campuses, and/or those that are part of a merged or network program may require more than one CLP. We ask that if your facility determines a need for more than one CLP, then you must justify the reasons in writing and submit supporting documentation to the CoC for review and approval.

The additional responsibility of serving as the Community Outreach Coordinator builds on the existing CLP responsibility of establishing partnerships with the local ACS. While the CLP will retain some of the duties previously assigned, such as spearheading CoC initiatives and using NCDB Hospital Comparison Benchmark Reports to identify variations in care, responsibilities such as data review for NCDB special studies and 10% case review may be assumed by one of the other designated cancer program coordinators. While the CoC does not want to eliminate areas in which the CLPs have been previously involved, it recommends that various coordinators should spearhead some of these duties with assistance from the CLP.

For questions, please contact Kate Phair at kphair@facs.org or 312-202-5529.

Mark Your Calendar: CoC Survey Savvy Workshop, October 2004

Survey Savvy is an essential workshop for cancer programs committed to providing high-quality care. This program is beneficial to facilities seeking initial approval, determining compliance with the Cancer Program Standards 2004, or preparing for re-approval.

When: Monday and Tuesday, October 25-26, 2004

Where: The Wyndham Hotel, 633 North Saint Clair Street, Chicago, IL

Fee: \$300

Who Should Attend: Cancer Program Administrators, Cancer Committee Chairs, Cancer Liaison Physicians, Cancer Registrars, Oncology Nurses, and other members of the multidisciplinary team

Registration will begin in May 2004. Future announcements will appear in CoC Flash, and details regarding the course and registration will be posted on the CoC Web site in coming weeks at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/index.html>. **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. Please do not make travel or hotel arrangements until you have received a confirmation of your registration from the CoC.

Reminder: Complete the SAR and Pre-Survey Documentation before Your On-site Visit

Programs should plan to fully complete the Survey Application Record (SAR) at least 30 days prior to the date of the on-site visit to allow adequate time to review and correct any information. If a printed copy of the SAR is not included with the other documentation, the surveyor will contact the registrar to obtain a printed copy prior to the on-site visit.

New CoC Resources and Tools Added to Web Site

The CoC has created new materials to assist programs in meeting standards and documenting compliance. They include:

Sample Best Practices

Bylaws (2.1)

Reporting to Cancer Committee (Chapter 2)

Job Descriptions for Coordinators (2.3)

Cancer Conference (2.9)

AJCC Staging Policy (4.3)

Quality Improvement and Assurance(2.5 and 8.1)

Clinical Management [Referral for Services Not Offered at the Facility and Inpatient Oncology Unit Structure Admissions](4.2)

Treatment Guidelines Resource List (4.6)

Clinical Trials Information (5.1)

Community Outreach (Chapter 6)

Located on the CoC Web site at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/resourcetools.html>, these tools and resources are not required, and represent only samples that may be modified to fit a facility's needs.

Inquiry and Response System (I&R) Updates

The CoC recently completed a review of the Inquiry and Response System (I&R). The following deletions, additions and updates have been implemented:

--All 2000, 2001, & 2002 questions and answers have been archived and will no longer be available on the Web site, and questions related to the AJCC Staging Manuals (4th & 5th editions), Cancer Program Standards, Volume I, ROADS, and ROADS edits have been removed.

--The remaining 2003 and 2004 questions and answers were reviewed to ensure that the category classification was complete and correct.

--The search function now includes Collaborative Stage and Cancer Program Standards 2004 categories.

The Web page "Frequently Asked Questions About the I&R System" has been updated to reflect these changes and includes more detailed examples of how to use the system.

Please be sure to try out the new and improved I&R at <http://www.facs.org/cancer/coc/iandr.html>.

A Question from I&R

In FORDS, where is the section on tumor markers?

There is no section on tumor markers. When *FORDS* was being written, it was expected that Collaborative Staging would begin at the same time as *FORDS* implementation in 2003. Since the Tumor Markers in *ROADS* were going to be included with the "Site-Specific Factors" in Collaborative Staging, their definitions were dropped from *FORDS*. In anticipation of the 2004 implementation of Collaborative Staging, the CoC has continually recommended that facilities collecting this information continue to do so to assure continuity of their data.

AJCC TNM Slide Library Available Online

The AJCC has developed a slide library consisting of site-specific material covering a variety of tumors. This excellent teaching tool will complement tumor conferences, physician CME events, or resident teaching conferences. Each slide set includes the site-specific TNM, stage grouping, and pertinent survival data. These slide sets can be downloaded for free under the "Education" section on the AJCC's Web site at <http://www.cancerstaging.org>.

Collaborative Staging Manual Distribution

The *Collaborative Staging Manual and Coding Instructions, Version 1.0*, is available at no charge. The supply is large, but limited. If you plan to request a copy, you should do so in the near future.

Three agencies are responsible for its distribution. Each organization is responsible for providing copies to their respective constituents.

- ACoS/CoC distributed one copy each to all CoC-approved cancer programs and cancer registry software vendors.
- NCI/SEER distributed copies to SEER registries that, in turn, will disseminate copies to SEER, non-CoC approved facilities in numerous states. *
- CDC/NPCR distributed copies to NPCR registries in numerous states.*

*Detailed information regarding state distribution and ordering is available on the AJCC Web site at <http://www.cancerstaging.org>. **NOTE:** The CDC no longer has copies of the CS manual available. Please contact either the ACS or the NCI-SEER to place an order.

In addition to print copies, this publication is available electronically and can be downloaded from the CS Web page at <http://www.cancerstaging.org/personnelinfo.html>.

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 Department of the American College of Surgeons.

The logo for CoC Flash, featuring the text "CoC Flash" in a bold, italicized, sans-serif font. The "CoC" is in a dark blue color, and "Flash" is in a lighter blue color. The logo is positioned in the top right corner of a dark blue horizontal bar that spans the width of the page.