There’s an old lawyer’s adage, “You never ask a question that you don’t know the answer to.” Those of us who deal in informatics break that rule every day. We’re often searching for the answer to deliver to the right person at the right time, and we really don’t know the answer to the question being asked. In fact, sometimes we don’t even know who can best use the information when we come up with an answer. A constantly shifting landscape in cancer has us searching for answers among marketing, financial, and, yes—sometimes even still—traditional clinical questions.

Not surprisingly, when the Informatics Committee was given the chance to ask a few questions of the membership, we boldly plunged ahead and developed a pop-up survey for attendees at NCRA’s Annual Educational Conference in Las Vegas. The survey asked attendees to answer four questions—and we thought we already knew the answers.

Throughout the year, the Informatics Committee operated on the assumption that our profession was as homogeneous as it had been for decades—i.e., we assumed that all or most CTRs are abstracting and that all or most CTRs are responding to informatics inquiries, in one form or another, in their own facilities. Based on that assumption, the committee worked on various projects, including creating the online Tool Kit for Casefinding and a proposal for a white paper, *The Value of the CTR in Cancer Abstracting*. The results of those two projects will be seen over the next few months, so stay tuned.

But were our assumptions correct? To find out, we asked attendees to respond to these questions (some phrases condensed for this article):

**Q: How many informatics requests, on average, does your department or your individual site respond to each week?**

A. 1 – 3  B. 3 – 5  C. 5+  D. 0

E. Not Sure

F. Remotely Working – No

G. Remotely Working – Yes (give #)

**Q: In a perfect world, I would:**

A. Abstract 100%  B. Abstract 50% / Informatics 50%

C. Informatics 100%  D. Don’t know (lack of experience)

**Q: This area of cancer informatics is my weakest:**

A. Numeracy  B. Technology

C. Finding ways to share the data within facility

D. Understanding how information flows in my facility—i.e., who needs what

**Q: If I added a skill to my resume right now, what would it be?**

A. Stats  B. Biology for informatics

C. Skills in visualizing data

D. Cancer data informatics management (within an informatics program)

The Committee received 86 completed surveys, which we then tallied and analyzed.

What did we learn, even with this small sample? The majority of our responses indicated CTRs are indeed fielding informatics queries, and the majority of all who answered want to be doing informatics (discounting those who felt they could not answer the question).

Across the board, numeracy, technology, and sharing cancer data were almost evenly noted as professional weaknesses, and statistics stood out as a missing skill set.

We’re aware that our survey takers were a self-selecting group comprising only those who actually dared to tackle it—although, in our opinion, it wasn’t very intimidating. We assume that some who might not have otherwise answered were enticed by the prize drawing. Going beyond these considerations, the Informatics Committee is facing the reality that CTRs are indeed the cancer informaticists in our facilities. Coupled with that, many of us know we must undertake continuing education that goes beyond simply meeting our credits. What is new is that many of us must face having to learn very unfamiliar skills and concepts. As some committee members have pointed out as an example, statistics is their own weakest skill and most often ranked as the one area certification exam takers find intimidating.

The Informatics Committee is spending the next few months discussing models for continuing education that will bring you many of these needed informatics skills in ways proven to have lasting impact. We are examining the literature and looking at other closely allied professions to see what has worked for them when crossing the bridge into new territory. And we will be asking more questions that we don’t know the answers to in hopes of finding a way to be of service to you and the cancer registry profession.

**JOCELYN HOOPES, MLIS, CTR, TTS | CHAIR, INFORMATICS COMMITTEE**

Learn more at [www.ncra-usa.org/informatics](http://www.ncra-usa.org/informatics).
Dear Colleagues,

It is my privilege to continue as The Connection's editor for the next two years. I would like to thank Leah Kiesow, Linda Corrigan and Mary Maloney for serving the last two years on the Editorial Advisory Board (EAB). I’d like to welcome Barbara Deamon to the EAB and thank Linda and Mary for continuing another two years. Your dedication is greatly appreciated.

Thanks to all our leadership; past, present and future. I think we all realize the importance of a vibrant organization and that great leadership is the key to success. Meet many new leaders while enjoying your read of The Connection.

Let’s give a warm welcome to our new President Linda Corrigan and read her message on Page 3 along with her Presidential Charges highlighted in the Professional Development article by Sharmen Dye on Pages 5 and 6.

For those of us that could not attend this year’s Annual Conference and those that could, take time to enjoy the articles and pictures available in this issue; see new faces and names.

Let’s celebrate the 74 new CTRs on Page 13; what a wonderful profession they have joined!

Look at Page 15 to see how many new members joined NCRA in just three months’ time; amazing!

To see what new member benefit is being offered by NCRA turn to Page 16; outstanding!

Please take time to sit and relax in your summer’s favorite spot and enjoy this full, informative and noteworthy issue of The Connection.

All the best,

Sherry Giberti, CTR
Editor, The Connection

The Connection | Summer | 2016

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The deadlines for article submission:
2. Articles should be submitted by email to NCRA.
3. The document should be formatted to include any text boxes or graphic art; this will be included in the publication if possible.
4. The NCRA Editorial Advisory Board of The Connection reserves the right to refuse publication of any article that is not appropriate. The NCRA Editorial Advisory Board will review the article and the editor will notify the author of any changes before the publication.

The Connection is the official newsletter of the National Cancer Registrars Association.

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Correspondence, inquiries, and articles must be sent to NCRA at info@ncra-usa.org.

Please direct address changes to: NCRA, 1330 Braddock Place, Suite 520 Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone: (703) 299-6640
Fax: (703) 299-6620
Email: info@ncra-usa.org
http://www.ncra-usa.org

Article Submission Requirements
1. Articles should pertain to newsworthy events affecting members of NCRA, including education, certification and articles of interest to the entire membership of NCRA. Also intended for inclusion are business matters of NCRA. Scientific articles are not appropriate for The Connection and should be submitted to NCRA’s Journal of Registry Management.

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The deadlines for article submission:
Sept 16, 2016 (fall issue)
Nov 18, 2016 (winter issue)
President’s Message

Hello fellow cancer registrars. I’m so grateful for your confidence in my skills and I’m excited to begin my year as your President. Over this past year, I’ve been thinking a lot about my own professional journey and how I ended up at this moment in time. “Journey” is a good word because it really fits with this organization and all of us. So while you read this article, I’d like to take you all on a train journey.

You know what they say about life being about the journey and not the destination? Well, that’s definitely true when you travel by train. It takes longer; but you get to meet different people, you can move from car to car, the scenery changes, the weather changes, and travelers are entering and exiting the train. The cancer registry profession is just like that train.

Let’s say you boarded the train and went right to the “abstracting” car and you stayed there for five years—but now you want to move to the management car. But you’re worried because it’s comfortable in that abstracting car and who knows what’s down in the management car. It would be nice to have someone to talk to, like a mentor in the management car.

Or maybe you got on the train in the follow-up car, passed your exam and you’d like to move to the central registry car—if only there was someone you could talk to in that car to find out more about it before you made the move.

The entire time we’re on this train journey, some of us are moving from car to car with the scenery changing and the weather changing. Remember when we went through the 2012 Cancer Program Standards hailstorm or the Collaborative Staging tunnel?

Personally, I’ve been on this train journey for 20 years now, longer than some, but not as long as others. Through all of the changes on this journey, NCRA has been the one constant. I feel like NCRA is the train. It is like the steel link and pin coupler that connect all the cars. NCRA has been with me when the tunnel was long and the storms came; it has been there with education, support, and mentorship. My colleagues and gurus, I met them on the NCRA train.

That CTR credential you earned after studying for and successfully passing the exam is not the destination, but rather just the beginning of the journey. A journey where you will have to continuously educate yourself because you know that the treatment of cancer is evolving and improving, and you will need to understand the changes. The process of manually and electronically capturing bits of cancer information from many sources on each cancer patient is evolving and improving, and you will need to understand the changes. The common language of cancer that we call staging is evolving and improving, with the AJCC Eighth Edition right around the corner, and you will need to understand the changes.

It really is an endless journey when you think about it. A journey where your knowledge will be tested every day you come to your desk; I know that’s true for me. And it doesn’t matter if you sit or stand at that desk or if it’s in your house or the central registry. Everything you have learned from the moment you started studying for the CTR exam up to this moment and the sessions you chose to attend make you, and all of us, THE MOST QUALIFIED AND ONLY HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS who should be recording the cancer patient’s journey. I truly believe that.

In my year as President I want to make sure that your best vehicle for your journey is NCRA. I want to make sure that your Board of Directors continues to look down the tracks for obstacles that will affect the entire train, like they have with directly coded TNM and Summary Stage, and then remove those obstacles with increased awareness and education.

There are many opportunities, too—advocacy opportunities that will benefit the entire train. We are going to continue to work on adding the occupational title “Medical Registrar” to the Standard Occupational Classification, but we also need to be working with partners to expand the position of our credential in those states without a CTR requirement. Then there is the National Moonshot Initiative—I would like to see cancer registrars invited to the table to contribute to that discussion. We need to engage in advocacy efforts at the state and federal level in support of our profession.

Unfortunately, more people are retiring and getting off the train than are getting on. We need to not only increase the number of professionals wanting to become registrars, but also figure out a way to ensure that, once they earn their CTRs, they don’t have to wait years to get a seat on the train.

Our membership has so much diversity, from those who abstract remotely from home to those who manage multiple registries in a system, from students to 30-year registry veterans. I believe NCRA can be a resource for each of us. Together, we can remove the obstacles on the track and seize opportunities, and I’m hoping you’ll partner with me to do that.

Finally, I’d ask you to consider this quote from Edith Wharton: “There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”

Which one are you?

LINDA CORRIGAN, MHE, RHIT, CTR | PRESIDENT, NCRA

“In my year as President I want to make sure that your best vehicle for your journey is NCRA.”
A Message from the President-Elect/Secretary

BARBARA DEARMON, CTR | PRESIDENT-ELECT/SECRETARY

As cancer registrars, we’re in a position to be advocates in the cancer field and share knowledge that might help individuals battling this disease. Over the past month, I’ve come into contact with several cancer survivors who shared their cancer journey with me after I explained to them my role as a cancer registrar at St. Vincent’s Medical Center. I like to provide family and friends with reliable cancer information from the American Cancer Society, National Comprehensive Cancer Network, and National Cancer Institute to help them make informed treatment decisions. I also believe it’s important to encourage cancer survivors to maintain follow-up with physicians so that organizations can effectively monitor patient outcomes.

I am Barbara Dearmon, your President-Elect/Secretary, and it’s an honor to have been elected to this position. I’m learning what’s involved in fulfilling this three-year term, and I look forward to serving on the NCRA Board. This is a great opportunity to volunteer at a national level representing the cancer registry profession and to continue to advocate for our field.

Eighth Edition of the AJCC Cancer Staging Manual Is Dedicated to Cancer Registrars

At NCRA’s Annual Educational Conference in April, Mahul B. Amin, MD, FACS, FCAP, Editor-in-Chief of the AJCC Cancer Staging Manual, announced that the manual’s eighth edition will be dedicated to cancer registrars. Dr. Amin cited the crucial role of registrars in collecting data that is vital to cancer research and to the care of the cancer patient. He recognized our professionalism and leadership, and our support of cancer staging principles.

At the conference, NCRA’s Immediate Past President Leah Kiesow, MBA, CTR, thanked the American Joint Committee on Cancer for this extraordinary honor. She said NCRA is pleased to know data collected by registrars play such an important role in keeping the manual up-to-date. The manual is used by physicians worldwide to stage a patient’s cancer and is critical in guiding treatment and determining prognosis. Kiesow stated, “Cancer registrars are elated to be acknowledged by the AJCC for the role they play in improving cancer patient outcomes.”

Certified Tumor Registrar

Geisinger Health System is seeking a Certified Tumor Registrar to join its Division of Cancer Registry.

Positions are available at
Geisinger Medical Center, located in Danville, PA
Geisinger Wyoming Valley, located in Wilkes-Barre, PA

- Join a collaborative, dynamic Cancer Registry team in a community hospital setting.
- Utilize special knowledge and technical skills to maintain components of the cancer registry.
- Partner with various Cancer Center personnel and participate in Cancer Center surveys to ensure accreditation.
- Offering excellent compensation, benefits, generous CME and time off.
- Location: GMC or GWV with possible telecommuting option after training and quality standards have been met.

For more information, visit geisinger.org/careers or contact:
Betsy Kelchner, Department of Talent Acquisition, at 570-214-0788 or brkelchner@geisinger.edu.

Living in northeast Pennsylvania
- Safe neighborhoods and affordable housing
- Great fishing, skiing, canoeing, hiking and biking
- International airport (Scranton/Wilkes-Barre)
- Local minor-league sports teams and fine dining
- Easy access to New York City and Philadelphia
- Excellent local public and private elementary/secondary schools
- Nine universities and graduate institutions in the immediate area
- Progressive and diverse city region of over 550K

Geisinger Health System serves more than 3 million people in central, south-central and northeast Pennsylvania and also in southern New Jersey with the addition of AtlantiCare, a National Malcolm Baldrige Award recipient. Geisinger is nationally recognized for innovative practices and quality care. A mature electronic health record connects a comprehensive network of 12 hospital campuses, 43 community practice sites and nearly 1,600 Geisinger primary and specialty care physicians.
Here are the related strategic objectives from the 2016–2018 Strategic Management Plan:

1. Review, update, and expand as necessary the comprehensive education plan.
2. Develop educational materials that will enhance the professional development and growth of registrars (basic and advanced).
3. Deliver comprehensive educational opportunities via annual conference, webinars, website, publications, formal education, etc.
4. Promote new enhanced relevant technology with knowledge and understanding.
5. Develop a “badging” program to acknowledge special skills development.

What’s happening behind the scenes? Each of the committees I oversee are constantly working and striving to move our profession forward. I sing the praises of our fantastic volunteer leadership and NCRA staff.

Formal Education Committee

Chair: Linda Fine
Team: Lori Boice, Penne Perry, Peg Miller, and Kathleen Foote
Staff: Mary Maul

This group is in the process of finalizing a program director survey to better understand how NCRA can recruit new schools. Members are also developing a new online HIPAA course for use by students seeking to complete their clinical practicum. (See the committee’s article in this issue of The Connection for more details about current projects.)

2016-17 Presidential Charges

➤ Work with pharma vendors to present complimentary webinars (2).
➤ Collaborate with the Independent Clinical Advisors (ICA) subgroup to develop an online HIPAA course to fulfill the clinical practicum requirement.
➤ Develop a webinar series on AJCC TNM Staging on related sites, e.g., three types/areas of GYN, three types/areas of lung, and three types/areas of lymphomas.
➤ Develop informational abstracts and CE quizzes on brain/CNS, lymphoma, and thyroid for the Center for Cancer Registry Education (www.cancerregistryeducation.org).

Formal Education Program Review Committee (FEPRC)

Chair: Heidi Noell, RHIT, CTR
Team: Cynthia Carlisle, Susan Artin-Daniel
Staff: Mary Maul

This team is small but oh-so-mighty! The committee has updated the accreditation manual and has posted it on the website for prospective programs. In addition, the committee oversees formal education-related activities being pursued by other committees.

The FEPRC is pleased to welcome Rochester Community and Technical College (Rochester, MN) and Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (Fennimore, WI) to the family of NCRA-accredited cancer registry management programs. To assist students in cancer registry programs, the NCRA Job Bank has clinical partners who will accept students for practicum activities. Visit the Job Bank at www.ncra-usa.org/clinical4students.

2016-17 Presidential Charges

➤ Based on the ongoing clinical practicum research of the Formal Education Committee, report adopted recommendations to the Board on expanded methods and opportunities for students meeting the 160-hour clinical practicum.

continued on page 6
The team is working collaboratively with the Formal Education Committee to develop a HIPAA presentation for clinical practicum students and materials to promote mentoring in state organizations. Mentoring services are in high demand among students and prospective registrars, and recruiting new mentors is always a priority with this committee. Many great ideas for new products and services to support cancer registry students came out of a joint meeting with the Formal Education Committee and the Education Committee in Las Vegas. This is a very creative and motivated group!

Presidential Charges for 2016-17

➤ Continue to include recruitment of mentors and mentees in the updates and published materials.

➤ Continue to lobby mentors for photos and bios for the Meet the Mentors section of the web pages.

➤ Develop a breakout session on mentoring and submit an abstract for the 2017 annual conference.

In closing, I’d like to share my personal thoughts on professional development: Keep moving forward!

We are on the cusp of some exciting new changes in cancer data reporting and collection. This allows for us all to learn something new and continue growing our unique skill set of cancer data collection. I consider myself a lifelong learner and encourage personal growth for everyone in the cancer registry profession.

What does it take to be a lifelong learner?

• Be reflective and open to new ideas and concepts.
• Utilize professional workshops and education opportunities.
• Stay current with professional literature and data.
• Network and knowledge share with peers and key partners.
• Use your personal experience and share it with others.
• Embrace trial and error. There are many ways to accomplish our goals.

I look forward to sharing more information as we forge ahead this year. Onward and upward!

New Initiatives Underway to Support Students Remotely

LINDA FINE, CTR | FORMAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR
LORI BOICE, RHIT, CTR; KATHLEEN FOOTE, CTR; PEG MILLER, RHIT, CTR; PENNE PERRY, RHIT, CTR

“Me, a Teacher? No Way!”

In your role as a cancer registry professional, you possess special expertise, skills, and insight. Have you ever stopped to consider that this knowledge makes you uniquely qualified to help teach, guide, and supervise students preparing for the CTR exam?

The NCRA Formal Education (FE) Committee has an opportunity for you to put your skills to work to help correct some of the not-so-good trends we’re seeing in cancer registry formal education. We’ve learned that cancer registry students and NCRA-accredited program directors are having trouble finding facilities that will host students onsite to complete the clinical practicum activities required to take the CTR exam.

In an effort to ameliorate the situation, the FE Committee is working collaboratively with the NCRA Mentoring and Education Committees to recruit special practicum advisors and develop products and services to support students who can’t find a site.

The group held a well-attended meeting in Las Vegas that morphed into a brainstorming session and resulted in many great ideas for training products. That list will be reviewed and acted upon by the FE and Education Committees.

Next, we’ll develop the initiative to recruit CTRs to work virtually with students. These CTRs will be called Independent Clinical Advisors (ICAs) and will act as supervisors for tasks required in the Formal Education Accreditation Standard's Professional Practice/Clinical Practicum document such as case abstraction, case finding, and follow-up activities, to name a few. Some of these tasks must be completed in a cancer registry, but ICAs will be able to use the virtual tools developed by the committees (webinars, online courses, chat sessions) to allow students to perform them remotely. ICAs will guide students through the practicum and on to the CTR exam!

We’re excited to begin this important project and we welcome your expertise, skills, and ideas to help us with development and implementation. If you have an interest in “working and teaching,” and would consider joining the subgroup, please contact NCRA staff member Mary Maul at mmaul@ncra-usa.org.
Public Health Problem: More than 75% of all cancers are diagnosed in people 55 years of age and older, and New Hampshire has the fourth-highest median age in the US. As a result, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS) is receiving a growing number of data requests and queries from researchers, hospitals, physicians, public health organizations, concerned citizens, and other stakeholders. The New Hampshire State Cancer Registry and NH DHHS encourage cancer data use by these stakeholders.

Use of Surveillance: Many data requests received by NH DHHS require very simple analyses. To help streamline these requests, the New Hampshire State Cancer Registry decided to create a web-based platform that stakeholders can use to obtain frequently requested aggregate cancer registry data summaries.

The benefits are many: The platform helps stakeholders find information quickly and easily; increases the visibility and utility of cancer registry data; and reduces registry staff workload.

Collaboration: The cancer data is housed on a website portal called WISDOM, short for “Web-based Interactive System for Direction and Outcome Measures.” The website, developed by the NH Division of Public Health Services (DPHS), contains information related to health risks, outcomes, and DPHS performance metrics for several public health topics, including cancer, heart disease, obesity/diabetes, asthma, and tobacco. Users can customize dashboards to access New Hampshire data on each topic. WISDOM can generate tables and figures from state cancer registry aggregated data for some cancers, including counts or rates stratified by age group, sex, year, county, and public health region (where those can be provided without jeopardizing patient confidentiality). The website is located at https://wisdom.dhhs.nh.gov/wisdom.

Public Health Outcome: WISDOM was used to generate most of the data and figures for the NH Cancer Report, 2006-2010 in an early pilot project. Through this pilot, the New Hampshire State Cancer Registry learned that it’s feasible to provide aggregate cancer data in an easily accessible web-based format for use in the creation of cancer incidence reports and for public use.

You can read more success stories and synopses of important data-driven projects happening across the US on the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/cancer/npcr/success/index.htm. If you work at a hospital registry and have a success story to share, please email it to Peggy Meehan at pmeehan@ncra-usa.org.
Thank you everyone for your continued support of the NCRA State Basket Raffle. The 2016 basket raffle in Las Vegas was once again a great success! There were 33 baskets donated and raffled this year. That was two baskets more than last year. Total revenue of ticket sales was $4332.00. The tickets were sold in bundles of 10 and individually.

The Education Foundation receives 50% of the ticket sales, and the remaining 50% is evenly distributed between the participating state associations.

It is so much fun to watch the different state association members create such interesting and imaginative baskets. Some state association baskets were filled with items that represent their state; some offer gift cards, entertainment activities, relaxation products, and other unique things. It is wonderful to work with such dedicated, imaginative and talented people.

Let’s talk about two other very dedicated people we know, Joyce and Dave Jones. They have been the mistress and master of this event for fifteen years. Thank you Joyce and Dave for your devotion to this fundraiser. We appreciate the hours you spend assisting participants with the basket assembly, displaying baskets, and presenting the winners in such an entertaining way. You motivate us all to participate and try to win.

Once again, thank you everyone for your continued support in this fundraiser! The Education Foundation and I hope you will continue to participate in this event again next year.

WINNERS OF THIS YEAR’S BASKETS:

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Just a few of the many unique and creative baskets.
NCRA 2015-2016 Award Winners

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS WHO WERE HONORED AT THE 2016 NCRA ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE IN LAS VEGAS, NV.

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD
Donna G. Weber, MA, CTR (pictured below in the middle), Past-President, Leah Kiesow, MBA, CTR (on the left), and Past-President, Susan Koering, MEd, RHIA, CTR (on the right)

OUTSTANDING NEW PROFESSIONAL AWARD
Angela Rodriguez, CTR

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Louise Schuman, MA, CTR (pictured below on the left) and Past-President, Donna M. Gress, RHIT, CTR

ELEKTA AWARD FOR JOURNAL OF REGISTRY MANAGEMENT: BEST PAPER OF THE YEAR 2015

**Article:** Availability of TNM Staging Data Elements in the Medical Record and Training Needs Assessment: Results from the 2014 Seer Training

**Authors:** Anne-Michelle Noone, MS; Nicola Schussler, BS; Serban Negoiu, MD, DrPh, CTR; Margaret (Peggy) Adamo, BS, CTR; Kathleen Cronin, PhD, MPH; Jean Cyr; Donna Gress, CTR, RHIT; Carmela Groves, RN, MS; Carol Kosary, DMgt; Benmei Liu, PhD; Leon Sun, PhD, CTR; Kevin Ward, PhD, CTR; Lynne Penberthy, MD, MPH

Margaret (Peggy) Adamo, BS, CTR (pictured below on the left) and Deborah L. Perriello, Elekta

ELEKTA AWARD FOR JOURNAL OF REGISTRY MANAGEMENT: HONORABLE MENTION: BEST PAPER OF THE YEAR 2015

**Article:** Current Status of Brain Tumor Surveillance in Canada and Why it Matters

**Authors:** Faith Davis, PhD; Chenthila Nagamuthu, MPH; Jordan Ross, MPH(c); Joseph Megyesi, MD, PhD

NCRA DANIELLE CHUFAR MEMORIAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP

**Title of Essay:** Royal Flush

**Author:** Rachel Maynard, BHS, CTR

ANNUAL CONFERENCE POSTER SESSION WINNERS

**First Place:** The Impact of Preoperative Magnetic Resonance Imaging in Detecting Additional Disease in Breast Cancer Patients

**Presenter:** Ann Thompson, PhD, CTR

**Second Place:** Primary Payer: Issues with Collection and Assessment of Data Quality

**Presenter:** Recinda Sherman, MPH, PhD, CTR

**Third Place:** The Tumor Registrar Profile in Puerto Rico

**Presenter:** Gladys Ojeda, BS, CTR
Royal Flush by Rachel Maynard, BHS, CTR

Sweat is running down your brow as you feel your heart beating out of your chest. You breathe calmly, hoping no one else notices the excitement you are feeling inside. Finally it is your turn to show your cards and, as you reveal them, everyone gasps. You have won the game! I don’t know if you are a poker player, but I want to explore some elements of the game with you. We will discuss the cards, the money, and the dealer. We will try to answer a question along the way: How does education, networking, and professional development work together to create an exceptional, well-rounded CTR professional? The recipient of the 2016 scholarship was Rachel Maynard, BHS, CTR. Her essay is below.

First, let’s talk about the cards. Cards are the foundation for the game of poker, just like education is the foundation for becoming an exceptional, well-rounded CTR. You cannot play the game of poker without cards, and you definitely cannot become a CTR without specialized education. Just as there are many strategies involved in the cards of a poker game, many educational sources are involved in becoming a CTR. You have coding rules, manuals, staging information, treatment information, and survival information, just to name a few. You must build a good educational foundation to be a successful CTR. However, cards alone do not constitute a game of poker, just like education alone will not create an exceptional, well-rounded CTR professional.

Next, we have the money. Money is the networking in the game of poker; without it you are not in the game. Plus, money makes poker fun, just like networking makes being a CTR fun. In poker, if you want to win big, you have to bet big money. As a CTR without networking, you may become isolated, burned out, and frustrated with your job, which will not create an exceptional, well-rounded CTR professional.

Last, we have the dealer. The dealer gets rid of the unwanted cards and dispenses new cards to the players; he controls the flow of the game. The dealer is like professional development and is aware of changing rules and regulations. Professional development is crucial in our field, as research is always discovering new things and any exceptional, well-rounded CTR should be on top of those changes and responding appropriately. Professional development will help you be able to influence and lead others by example. You will be increasingly effective in the workplace and have a much more fulfilling and rewarding career. Without a dealer, a poker game cannot continue and, without professional development, a CTR would not be able to deliver high-quality service, which is necessary to be an exceptional, well-rounded CTR professional. True professionals never stop when it comes to learning.

As the song goes…“you gotta know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em, know when to walk away, know when to run”…in poker. Becoming an exceptional, well-rounded CTR professional involves knowing and understanding that you start with education and resources, then network as much as possible, and always pursue professional development, as our field is ever-changing and evolving. No shortcuts or “folds” will obtain the results of education, networking, and professional development. Some may even say “It’s the luck of the draw,” but when you have the education of cards, the network of money, and the professional development of the dealer all working together, I would call that an exceptional, well-rounded CTR professional of a ROYAL FLUSH!
Keynote speaker, Dr. Harold Freeman discussed the Patient Navigation concept and model which addresses disparities in access to treatment, particularly among poor and uninsured people.

Applause for the new CTRs during the Awards and Installation Luncheon.

CDC-NPCR poster exhibit showcases how central cancer registry data are used to impact public health.
I am Charlotte Terbot, CTR, and have been appointed interim chair for the Membership Committee. The Membership Committee hosted a successful welcome breakfast for new members and first-time attendees during the 2016 NCRA Annual Educational Conference in Las Vegas. The Committee reported that 96 participants attended the breakfast. The event provided an excellent opportunity for attendees to network with other NCRA members and volunteer leaders (including the Board of Directors), gain valuable conference tips, and learn about the benefits of membership. This event also allowed several Membership Committee members to take on expanded leadership roles by serving as presenters along with Directors Leah Kiesow, MBA, CTR; Janet Reynolds, CTR; and Terri Richardson, RHIA, CTR.

This year I had the opportunity to present at the breakfast. I am passionate about our work and know it makes a difference to families affected by the diagnosis of cancer. The best way to support the men and women doing this work is to have a strong organization behind them. My advice to you is that when you join a group such as NCRA, the best way to get to know what it’s all about is to jump in and volunteer. If you have the skills and experience to mentor, step up to the plate and give a bit of your time to support your team members. There is enough work for everyone, and the experience of talking and getting to know other cancer registrars is invaluable.

Here’s what a couple of NCRA Membership Committee volunteers have to say:

**Ebony Johnson, CTR**, is a new CTR who joined NCRA in fall 2015 and the Membership Committee three months later.

“I’m brand new to NCRA and I chose to put myself out there and hit the ground running. One thing I really enjoy about this career field is the camaraderie among registrars. I knew that with NCRA, I would have the opportunity to meet registrars from all over the country—so what better way to jumpstart the event than to be able to introduce myself to everyone at the New Member & First Timers Breakfast? By presenting at the breakfast, people got to know me, which made it easier for me to get to know them. Several people at the conference told me they didn’t know how to get involved or they thought that the positions seemed to require so much experience. I’m here to say that it’s as easy as reaching out and letting the NCRA staff know you want to be involved.”

**Sheron Keeling, CTR**, has been a member of NCRA for the past 12 years. In 2015, she decided that she was ready to give back to the profession.

“I found that once I joined the Membership Committee, I gained a great fulfillment from my involvement. As a result of presenting during the breakfast, I was able to meet and connect with many other members. They had so many questions about the qualifications of becoming a committee member and whether I had any special training to prepare for the Membership and Website Committees. I explained that the knowledge and support provided to volunteers by NCRA has been helpful. I am learning from staff as well as from other committee members.”

Other members of the committee include: Mary Marshall, CTR; Frances N. Okubo-Hughes, CTR; Augusta H. Rullow-St Louis, CTR; and Farrah Scodius, BS, CTR. In addition to our membership recruitment and retention activities, the Membership Committee is also developing a process to promote and help connect more members to volunteering opportunities. Interested in getting involved? Please send an email to member@ncra-usa.org.
New CTRs

The spring CTR Exam was taken by candidates at testing centers worldwide during the February 27 – March 19, 2016 testing window. Seventy-four (74) candidates passed the exam and formally became Certified Tumor Registrars. NCRA’s Council on Certification proudly congratulates all new CTRs!

Alabama
Amber Davis, Opelika

Alaska
Diane Sallee, Anchorage

Arizona
Brooke Ives, Gilbert
Jean Marie Thelen-Oliverius, Avondale

Arkansas
David Michael Couch, Jonesboro
Kathy Fors, Springdale
Kimberly Nuñez, Jonesboro

California
Donicia Moreno, Cabazon
Ebony Reed, Irvine
Tamela Yelland, Upland

Colorado
Leah Denson, Calhan

Connecticut
Rosemary Crawford, Waterford
Nicole Tomarchio, Newington

Florida
Prudence L.M. Ashley, Winter Haven
Heather Duque, Palm Harbor
Elizabeth Martinez, Miami
Kari Oliger, Naples
Laura Ortega, Estero
Carrie Scott, Tampa

Georgia
Meredith LeBeau, Savannah
Christine Racey, Albany

Idaho
Erin Moreira, Meridian

Illinois
Vera Chernyshova, Libertyville
Mary Mika, Chicago
Brittney Perry, Germantown Hills

Kansas
Julie Mammen, Overland Park

Kentucky
Tammy Eblin, Glasgow
Judy Taylor, Taylor Mill

Massachusetts
Thora Healy, Lawrence
Kathleen Roche, Norfolk

Maryland
Elaine Flores, Silver Spring

Michigan
Kathryn Benedict, Manchester
Autumn Herriman, Davison

Minnesota
Pamela Jenson, Big Lake

Missouri
Peter Audello, Kansas City
Deborah Carey, Joplin
Kelly Diabagate, Saint Louis

New Jersey
Julie Gifford, Vineland
Melanie Martin, Plainsboro
Veronica Sandell, Medford

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Heather Donohue, Castleton
Rosa Hammer, Middle Island
Abbey Homic, Glenville
Michael Jacklin, Westbury
Christina Maratos, Yorktown Heights
Samantha Nguyen, Albany
Sharon Ragaini, Glens Falls
Umbreen Sarwar, Bronx
Bernice Williams, Troy

North Carolina
Robert Aldrich, Chapel Hill
Carrie Ceryn, Cary
Pamela Jane Childress-Obenauf, Winston-Salem
Simone Antoinette Gordon, Charlotte
Pamela Hall, Clayton
Breanna Marcum, Aberdeen
Joella Marting, Cary

Ohio
Stacie Lyn Kreinbrink, Maumee
Kathryn Martin, Warren

Oregon
Marian Blasquez, Bend
Shannon Ibabao, Clackamas

Pennsylvania
Julia DiFillippo, Philadelphia

Tennessee
Jennifer Bowden, Newport
Laura Henry, Knoxville

Texas
Mercy Cherian, Sugar Land
Meagan Crawford, Amarillo

Virginia
Penelope Johnson, Roanoke

Washington
Tracey Henning, Spokane
Josephine Paet, Lacey

West Virginia
Pamela Roberts, Inwood

Wisconsin
Katie Napiwocki, Wisconsin Rapids
Nancy Palmer, Milwaukee
Angela Paradowski, Oak Creek
Ivana Pupovac, Kenosha
Samantha Reynolds, Wausau
As I write this article, I’m sitting in a Westgate Hotel conference room, anxiously awaiting the opening presentation of the 42nd NCRA Annual Educational Conference in Las Vegas. Like me, if you attended the conference this year, you gained new knowledge to share with colleagues and enjoyed many opportunities to network and meet new people. If you weren’t able to attend, I highly recommend you try to make it next year. The face-to-face networking is invaluable, providing opportunities to find out how other registrars are dealing with changes in the field, resource allocation, and some of the same challenges you face. This is a nice time to put the electronic gadgets away (at least for a few minutes) and actually have face-to-face conversations. Trust me, you’ll never eat breakfast, lunch, or dinner alone!

In the JRM Summer 2016 issue, we are highlighting the poster presentations from the conference. Congratulations to the poster presenters and their teams!

We’ll also be publishing the following original articles:

- “The Timeliness of Breast Cancer Treatment in Delaware” by Stephanie H. Belinske, MPH, and team;
- “Abstracting the Quality Index Scores from SEER*Educate to Monitor Employee Improvement” by Mary Potts, RHIA, CPA, CTR, and colleagues;
- “Developing a Statistical Process Quality Tool for a Venous Thromboembolic Disease Registry” by Maria Lourdes Posadas Martinez, MD, PhD, and team;
- “The Development of an NPCR Statistical Analysis Tool for Cancer Relative Survival Analysis” by Xing Dong and colleagues; and
- “Bridging the Gap,” a Raising the Bar story, by Michelle Webb

I encourage each of you to submit a manuscript or article for publication in JRM. Don’t know what to write about? How about writing an article on quality control/assurance metric, lesson learned from a cancer registry management perspective, a process you’ve successfully implemented with your team, or a study that you or a team member conducted that you’d like to share? Or information regarding the sunset of Collaborative Staging, the transition to AJCC TNM Staging, or the sunrise of ICD-10? We’d love you to share your expertise!

Address all communication to Vonetta L. Williams, PhD, MPH, CTR, Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Registry Management, (813)745-1783, JRMEditor@ncra-usa.org.

Manuscript submission requirements can be found in “Information for Authors” on the inside back cover of each Journal and on the NCRA website at www.ncra-usa.org/jrm.
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<tr>
<td>Heather Wendt</td>
<td>Jacksonville, FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Westergard</td>
<td>Dresden, ME</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janna White</td>
<td>Durham, NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tiffany Whitt</td>
<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cynthia M. Woods</td>
<td>Carmel, IN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trina Wright</td>
<td>Soddy Daisy, TN</td>
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<td>Tucson, AZ</td>
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<td>Pleasant Hill, MO</td>
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2016 Election Results

TINA A. GROGAN, CTR | NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the results of the 2016-2017 Board Directors, Nominating Committee, and Council on Certification elections. Congratulations to NCRA’s newly elected leaders!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President-Elect/Secretary
Barbara J. Dearmon, BS, CTR

Treasurer Junior
Kathleen (Kathy) Hess, RHIT, CTR

Professional Development Director
Sharmen A. Dye, CTR

Public Relations Board Director
Donna M. Lanphear, CTR

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

East Region:
Marilyn Hansen, CTR
Ellen R. Kolender, RHIA, CTR, MHA

Midwest Region:
Karen J. Ellwood, RHIT, CTR
Sharon A. Pifer, CCS, CTR

West Region:
Linda K. Fine, CTR
Melissa C. Lewis, BS, CTR

COUNCIL ON CERTIFICATION

Council on Certification Representatives
Robin Harris Billet, CTR
Janette S. Laubacher, CTR
Gwendolyn Lynch, CTR, CCRP
Kyle L. Ziegler, CTR

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Now Is Your Time to Shine: Run for an Elected NCRA Position

TINA A. GROGAN, CTR | NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR

As the registry profession continues to change, the number of NCRA projects that address new challenges and opportunities is increasing. There has never been a better time to become involved in NCRA as an elected officer!


OPEN BOARD OF DIRECTOR POSITIONS:

- **President-Elect/Secretary** (one-year term, with roll-up to President [one-year term] and to Immediate Past President [one-year term])
- **Treasurer Junior** (one-year term with rollup to Treasurer Senior)
- **Education Board Director** (two-year term)
- **Retention & Recruitment Board Director** (two-year term)
- **Advocacy and Technical Practice Board Director East** (two-year term)
- **Advocacy and Technical Practice Board Director Midwest** (two-year term)
- **Advocacy and Technical Practice Board Director West** (two-year term)

Prospective Board candidates should view the presentations at www.ncra-usa.org/BoDPresentations to better understand the responsibilities and time commitment required.

OTHER OPEN OFFICES:

- **Council on Certification Representatives** (four positions, each serving a two-year term)
- **Nominating Committee Members – East, Midwest and West Regions** (two positions per region, each serving a one-year term)

Serving as an NCRA volunteer is a rewarding experience. Your efforts can strengthen the influence of the profession and NCRA, increase NCRA's value to its members and the profession, and effectively govern and lead the association—all while enhancing your career. You’ll also interact with peers from across the country, gaining new colleagues, friends, and mentors.

Please consider running for one of these offices. If you’re unable to do so this upcoming year, considering nominating another member with great leadership skills (with her/his permission). Either way, you’ll be serving NCRA—and yourself.
The Connection | Summer | 2016

1330 Braddock Place, Suite 520
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-299-6640 • www.ncra-usa.org
www.CancerRegistryEducation.org

National Cancer Registrars Week | April 10-14, 2017

Cancer Registrars:
Putting the Pieces Together

Learn more about NCRW 2017 at www.ncra-usa.org/ncrw

Connect with NCRA Through Social Media

Keep up-to-date on NCRA news and events and network with colleagues on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

NCRA recently updated its Privacy Policy and Website/Social Media Guidelines. Please take a few minutes to review them at www.ncra-usa.org/SocialMedia.

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Join NCRA’s Member Group: www.ncra-usa.org/FBMemberGroup

LinkedIn
Follow NCRA on LinkedIn: www.ncra-usa.org/LinkedIn
Join NCRA’s Member Group: www.ncra-usa.org/LinkedInGroup

Twitter
Follow NCRA on Twitter: www.twitter.com/NCRAnews

NATIONAL CANCER REGISTRARS WEEK | APRIL 10-14, 2017

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