NCRA POLICY STATEMENT ON MONITORING CHANGES IN CANCER REGISTRY OPERATIONS

The National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA) is a professional organization that represents Cancer Registrars involved in the collection of cancer diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes data. NCRA recognizes that changes in processes of how data are collected are essential to operationalize technological advancements and improvements. Historically, Certified Tumor Registrars (CTRs) have been innovators in the collection of cancer data. With this policy statement NCRA is expressing the vital role of the CTR in the abstraction process and the value they add to the data collection process.

The CTR abstracts data using quality controls including standardized vocabularies and highly described fields allowing for comparison of diagnoses, treatment, and outcomes across cancer histologies and primary sites, as well as patient characteristics. The resulting records produced are of high intrinsic value and researchers rely on them to produce quality studies. However, changes such as automated abstraction, made possible through mapping of EH/MR fields to the cancer abstract fields, may result in the elimination of these value-added quality controls implemented by the Certified Tumor Registrar (CTR).

It is the position of NCRA that before implementation of technological advancements, specifically, automated abstraction, they must meet the minimum standards of representing patient case data with:

- **Fidelity** - The degree to which the data represents the actual case history of the patient.
- **Predictability** - The percent of occurrences in which the abstract will be accurate.

NCRA believes that any technology that does not meet this dual threshold should not be promoted and brought to scale as a functional alternative to direct abstraction. The quality proposition of the abstraction process managed by the CTR serves as a benchmark that must be met or exceeded by new technology. Once met, the profession looks forward to a day when the CTR may be a “data curator” continuing the tradition of partnership in cancer data collection.

NCRA considers itself an essential partner in the prevention and cure of cancer. It supports the activities of all organizations involved with collecting cancer data and offers its help in monitoring necessary changes.