On a Mission: Education for a Changing Environment
NCRA 2015 Annual Educational Conference Summary

DIANNE CLEVELAND, RHIA, CTR AND KIMBERLY WILLIS, CTR, 2015 CO-PROGRAM CHAIRS

NCRA’s 41st Annual Educational Conference in San Antonio provided exceptional learning opportunities. From the two-day pre-conference workshop, SEER: 2015 Advanced Topics for Registry Professionals, to our post-conference workshops, Cancer Informatics for Registrars: From Bedside to Big Data and One-Day Intensive CTR Exam Prep, the Program Committee strove to meet the needs of registry professionals working in many capacities and at all levels of cancer data management.

As members of the cancer registry community, our immediate future includes the transition from Collaborative Stage to directly coded AJCC TNM staging.

Our keynote speaker, Clement Bezold, PhD, highlighted our commitment to education and advocacy. His position as founder and chairman of the Institute for Alternative Futures and as a consultant for the healthcare industry embodies the idea of education in a changing environment. His vision for the future of healthcare, and the role of cancer data management in this future, helped us all better understand our part in arriving at our “preferred future” in healthcare and the ever-expanding role of cancer registry data in the development of policy that impacts the future of oncology care.

Our conference program had a major focus on introducing new registrars to directly coded stage and refreshing past knowledge of this system, including site-specific presentations. It also included excellent information for central cancer registries and topics on registry management, and—in our professional development sessions—facilitated opportunities to grow.

Thank you to our sponsors and exhibitors who made the Exhibit Hall a resounding success with the latest in cancer registry products and services, and to the state organizations for their tremendous support.

And a special thank you to NCRA’s Education Committee and Program Committee for helping us provide an outstanding program in the unforgettable city of San Antonio. We hope you enjoyed the beauty, amazing history, and culture of the Riverwalk and San Antonio, and returned home better equipped to face the many changes impacting our field.

We look forward to reviewing your evaluations and incorporating your ideas into next year’s educational program. See you at the 2016 Annual Conference, April 10-13, 2016 in Las Vegas.

Learn more about next year’s conference at www.ncra-usa.org/conference
Dear Colleagues:
I would like to thank the NCRA's Education Committee and Program Committee for a successful conference in San Antonio, TX. It was a remarkable program and inviting city. Take time to read the cover article, enjoy the pictures of events, and note the lucky winners of many baskets throughout this summer edition of The Connection.
Leah Kiesow, our new NCRA President has a powerful message on page 3 encouraging all registrars to embrace the challenges of the industry as it gives us more opportunities to develop personally, professionally and academically.

On page 5, Angela Rodriguez reminds us that being an active member of NCRA reaps many benefits as we participate in our great organization. Enjoy the great essay by Cheryl Varela, on page 10 that gained her the honor as recipient of the Danielle Chufar Memorial Annual Conference Scholarship.

Meet Vonetta Williams, Editor-In-Chief of the Journal of Registry Management. Flip to page 11 and learn how she became involved not only in NCRA but also the Journal of Registry Management.

How lucky is our profession as we welcome 67 new CTRs! Check out page 14.

Congratulations to all the newly elected Board of Directors, Nominating Committee and Council on Certification. See who you know on page 16. Then turn to page 17 to see what positions you might be interested in filling or in nominating another member.

Thank you to our wonderful authors for their dedication to us by sharing their knowledge and ideas.

Have a great summer,
President’s Message

Hello fellow registrars! I appreciate the opportunity to serve as your NCRA president for the coming year. Thank you! With each year that passes—and as I continue to cross paths with new members and new faces—I feel even more privileged to be working in the registry profession.

The short version of how I entered the registry profession is probably one that some of you can relate to. The first time I heard the words “tumor registry” was during a medical coding course. The instructor simply stated, “Tumor registrars record data about tumors.” I assumed people in this line of work must spend their days measuring the size of tumors, determining their anatomic location, weighing them, and then recording this data somewhere in a database. It wasn’t until I completed my coding internship for a certification program that I learned my preconceived ideas about tumor registrars were far out in left field. During the course of that internship, I shared an office with a seasoned cancer registrar. I became increasingly curious about the role of the registrar, the required training, and the job market. As the internship came to an end, I decided the registry was where I wanted to be. I asked, “Where do I sign up and how do I get a job?”

My registry career started in 2005 at a large network health system in Portland, Oregon. Shortly after passing the CTR exam in 2008, I decided to take on a new challenge and applied for the supervisor position of the registry. After stepping into this role, I realized that overseeing five hospitals in a network-approved cancer program was going to provide some exciting and challenging times. These experiences helped me see the bigger picture and gain a better understanding of healthcare and what was required to run a successful cancer program. A few years later, my curiosity and appetite for adventure led me to a registry in North Carolina and then to Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia, where I currently work as the director of the cancer registry. Fox Chase is a National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center that is accredited by the CoC and the NAPBC and is a member of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN).

I firmly believe unplanned circumstances have a way of working out. Fast forward to 2015 and 10 years later, I have no regrets about the professional path I chose. Having spent the majority of my registry experience in leadership positions, I’ve been able to mentor new registrars; lead registrars through standards and coding changes, CoC surveys, CTR exam preparation, EHR transitions, and departmental reorganizations; and provide assurance during institutional restructuring. Providing leadership to peers and colleagues is one of my passions. I take this challenge very seriously and, at the end of the day, I find it very rewarding to serve and help others in this capacity.

LEAH KIESOW, MBA, CTR | PRESIDENT, NCRA

“So what’s in store for registrars and the profession? If I believed in crystal balls and could see the future, I wouldn’t hesitate to share. My experience and intuition tells me that we will continue to expand our knowledge of cancer surveillance, outcomes, patient care, and the practice of medicine. We will also be challenged in this industry, which will provide more opportunities to develop personally, professionally, and academically. Keeping pace with the changing landscape of healthcare, quality-of-care standards, and data collection is crucial, and I don’t see this changing. Developing future registry leaders who can provide direction and encouragement during times of transition and change will also be crucial to the success of the industry. Registrars have long been tasked with ensuring that data collection is timely, complete, and accurate. These are goals not easy to achieve, but as data are used more and more to inform care and treatment choices, as well as a facility’s operational decisions, we will be asked to do more. And we can do it!

I’d like to say thank you to Fox Chase Cancer Center for its support and recognition of my presidency and to my colleagues for their ongoing acknowledgement and praise. I feel very fortunate to work in a place that not only values the cancer registry, but also has a heart to continually serve the patients and communities they live in. I would also like to thank my family and friends for supporting me through my endeavors and adventures over the last few years. You have all played a part in helping me get to where I am today.

Thank you,

[Signature]

LEAH KIESOW, MBA, CTR | PRESIDENT, NCRA

“I firmly believe unplanned circumstances have a way of working out.”
NCRA's mission is to serve as the premier education, credentialing, and advocacy resource for cancer registry professionals. As you know, NCRA operates under the guidance of its three-year Strategic Management Plan (SMP). We just completed our most recent three-year plan (2012-2014), and we need to determine whether we should develop a new SMP or update the existing one.

The SMP includes six major strategies:

1. Education and Professional Development
2. Credentialing
3. Recruitment and Retention
4. Member and Customer Services
5. Advocacy
6. Administrative and Finance

The Governance Planning and Evaluation Committee (GPEC) is responsible for SMP management and administration. Members of the committee include Barb Collins, CTR; Inez Inman, BS, RHIT, CTR; Shannon Hart, CTR; Melanie Rogan, CTR; and Terri Richardson (Chair), RHIA, CTR. NCRA Executive Director Lori Swain, MS, provides technical and administrative support.

The NCRA staff recently analyzed all components of the current plan to demonstrate our progress toward meeting plan outcomes and tasks. NCRA provided this information to members who stopped by the NCRA booth during the Annual Educational Conference. You can find a copy of this handout on the NCRA website at www.ncra-usa.org/SMPhandout.pdf.

GPEC recently surveyed the membership to determine if they feel the strategies in the current SMP are still relevant. Members were asked to rate how relevant they find each of the current strategies and how they would edit the strategy so that it becomes more relevant. We’d like to extend a special thanks to those of you who took the time to complete the survey. GPEC will meet this summer to review the survey results and decide whether the current SMP will be updated or if a new one will be developed. We’ll update you on the next steps later this fall.

I open the PDF of this week’s pathology reports, I review the diagnoses for reportability, and then I begin entering the malignant cases into my registry database. As I look at names and dates of birth I see her. I see a co-worker, someone I pass in the hall and say “Good morning” to. This is my job, a series of names and diagnoses; they are faceless, and it’s easier that way. But this path report is not faceless. This path report belongs to a nice woman who is younger than I am.

I am Linda Corrigan, your President-Elect/Secretary, and I just want to say that cancer sucks! I became a cancer registrar because I’m good with details and I like healthcare. It never occurred to me that this profession could be emotionally difficult— I’ll just be sitting at a computer entering data, right?

As I begin my term, I am so appreciative of your confidence in me and of this amazing opportunity to connect with the membership and grow as a leader. So the next time this work we do tugs at your heart, get up from your desk, take a deep breath and remember—we’re all in this together.

The Governance Planning and Evaluation Committee (GPEC) would like to extend a special thanks to those of you who took the time to complete the survey.

LINDA CORRIGAN, MHE, RHIT, CTR | PRESIDENT-ELECT/SECRETARY

TERRI RICHARDSON, RHIA, CTR | GPEC CHAIR

We’re All in This Together

“This path report belongs to a nice woman who is younger than I am.”

“GPEC would like to extend a special thanks to those of you who took the time to complete the survey.”

Strategic Management Plan Update
My name is Angela Rodriguez and I work for UNC Rex Healthcare in Raleigh, North Carolina. I became a CTR in 2013 and I’m currently volunteering with the Membership Committee to help grow my career and assist NCRA.

Committee Activities: At this year’s NCRA Annual Conference in San Antonio, we hosted our second annual First Timer’s Event, where we welcomed new CTRs and first-time conference attendees. We provided the 64 attendees with a brief introduction to NCRA and the many benefits that come from being part of our organization. In addition, to create a valuable and productive conference experience for new attendees, we provided seven great tips on how to make the most of NCRA’s annual conference.

The membership committee began the annual lapsed-member telephone calling to determine if lapsed members would like to renew or if they’ve retired or are no longer working in the cancer registry field.

As of July 31, 2015, we have 5,714 members. But being an active member means more than just paying dues—it means volunteering and taking action on behalf of NCRA. You’ll reap many benefits from being an active member:

- **Connections:** Change is the norm in our field, and NCRA provides an extensive network of peers to communicate and collaborate with.
- **Education:** NCRA makes it easy to stay up-to-date with the latest requirements through webinars and the educational resources on the Center for Cancer Registry Education website at [www.cancerregistryeducation.org](http://www.cancerregistryeducation.org).
- **Problem solving:** Take advantage of our website and Facebook page to get help from fellow registrars. This alone is worth the cost of membership!
- **Advocacy:** There’s power in numbers. You can use our advocacy tools to voice support for the changes you’d like to see in our profession.

So how do you become an active member?

- **Attend national and state meetings:** At the very least, you’ll learn something new, and you can share the information with your team of coworkers. Just as important, though, are the opportunities to network with other registrars.
- **Volunteer:** Be a part of the bigger picture and be a part of the changes. Anyone can voice an opinion, but only by taking action do you become part of the solution.
- **Organize:** Help organize meetings. This gives you a chance to network, plus you might gain more understanding of what your peers are doing to move the organization forward.
- **Content:** You think you’re good? Prove it! Publish articles, collaborate on projects, and share the content. Everyone benefits from your knowledge.

Being an active member is about participating in meaningful ways and reaping the benefits of your efforts. How can you be more active this year?

To learn more about your NCRA member benefits, visit [www.ncra-usa.org/benefits](http://www.ncra-usa.org/benefits).

Committee Members:

- Margie Jenkins, BS, CTR
- Mary Marshall, CTR
- Susan Missey, CTR
- Janet Reynolds, CTR, BA (Board Liaison)
- Charlotte Terbot, CTR
Public Health Problem:
Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer mortality in the US, and there were 1.5 million deaths worldwide from this disease in 2010. The overall five-year survival rate for lung cancer is less than 15%, due largely to the late stage at which most patients are diagnosed and the lack of effective treatments for this systemic disease. A sensitive screening approach for lung cancer could markedly reduce the high mortality rate for this disease. Previous studies have shown that methylation of gene promoters is present in exfoliated cells within sputum prior to lung cancer diagnosis. Colorado Central Cancer Registry conducted a nested case-control study of incident lung cancer cases from an extremely high-risk cohort to evaluate promoter methylation of 14 genes in sputum. Controls (n = 92) were cohort members matched to cases (n = 98) by gender, age, and month of enrollment.

Use of Surveillance:
Surveillance data were used to determine which patients in the cohort had developed lung cancer. Without a comprehensive surveillance system, studies of this nature would not be possible.

Collaboration:
Colorado Central Cancer Registry staff collaborated with researchers to conduct the data linkage necessary for the analysis.

Implications of Cancer Registry Data Usage:
The comparison of proximal sputum collected within 18 months to >18 months prior to diagnosis showed that the prevalence for methylation of gene promoters increased as the time to lung cancer diagnosis decreased. Six of 14 genes were associated with a >50% increased lung cancer risk. The concomitant methylation of three or more of these six genes was associated with a 6.5-fold increased risk and a sensitivity and specificity of 64%. This was the first study to prospectively examine a large panel of genes for their ability to predict lung cancer and showed the promise of gene promoter hypermethylation in sputum as a molecular marker for identifying people at high risk for cancer incidence.

Registrars in Action column highlights the impact cancer registrars have on public health. Cancer registrars collect standardized data on a daily basis to submit to central cancer registries (CCRs), and the data are then submitted to the National Program of Cancer Registries (NPCR). Administered by the CDC, NPCR collects data on cancer occurrence (including the type, extent, and location of the cancer) and the type of initial treatment. Today, through NPCR, the CDC supports central cancer registries in 45 states, DC, Puerto Rico, and the US Pacific Island jurisdictions.

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.
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS WHO WERE HONORED AT THE 2015 NCRA ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE IN SAN ANTONIO, TX.

**Distinguished Member Award**
Sally Kruse, CTR (*pictured on the left*)

**Elekta Award for Journal of Registry Management: Best Paper of the Year 2014**
“Using an Existing Birth Defects Surveillance Program to Enhance Surveillance Data on Stillbirths.”
Authors: Wes Duke, MD, MPH; Suzanne M. Gilboa, PhD, MHS

**Elekta Award for Journal of Registry Management: Best Paper of the Year 2014 - Honorable Mention**
“Assessing the Quality of Race/Ethnicity, Tumor, and Breast Cancer Treatment Information in a Non-SEER State Registry”
Authors: Abigail Silva, PhD, MPH; Garth H. Rauscher, PhD, MPH; Carol Estwing Ferrans, PhD, RN, FAAN; Kent Hoskins, MD; Ruta Rao, MD

**NCRA Danielle Chufar Memorial Annual Conference Scholarship**
“What Impact Will the Transition to AJCC TNM and Summary Stage Have on Cancer Registrars”
Cheryl Varela, CTR
Scenes from the 2015 Annual Conference

Keynote speaker, Clement Bezold, PhD, talks about the future of primary care and implications for cancer surveillance.

The exhibit hall was buzzing with activities as attendees visited vendors showcasing new products and services.

An attendee demonstrates success using the conference mobile app to review downloaded handouts and to network with other attendees.
NCRA Education Foundation Update

SARA BIESE, RHIT, CTR | FOUNDATION BOARD CHAIR

The NCRA Education Foundation would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Sue Koering, MEd, RHIA, CTR for her dedication, leadership, and encouragement during her tenure as Foundation chair over the last three years.

We'd also like to welcome our new Foundation directors, who will each serve a three-year term:

- Lillian Antonelli-Twal, MS, CTR – New York
- Dianne Cleveland, RHIA, CTR – Texas
- Herman Menck, BS, MBA, CPhil, FACE – California
- NCRA President Leah Kiesow, MBA, CTR, will serve as an ex-officio member.

The following directors are continuing their service on the Board:

- Eileen Abate, CTR – New York
- Sara Biese, RHIT, CTR – Wisconsin (Chair)
- Betty Gentry, BS, CTR – Georgia (Vice Chair)
- Joe Holcombe, MBA - Oklahoma
- Tiffany Johnson, CTR – Florida (Secretary)
- Lori Swain, MS – Virginia (NCRA Executive Director)
- Lori Travers, RHIT, CTR – Idaho (Treasurer)

Thank you Terri Richardson, RHIA, CTR, for serving as the ex-officio member of the Board as NCRA president. We truly appreciate the expertise and time you shared with us.

NCRA State Basket Raffle

The State Basket Raffle was a huge success in San Antonio! Total revenue from ticket sales was $4,996. The Education Foundation receives 50% of the ticket sales, and the remaining 50% is evenly divided among participating state associations. Thank you to everyone for participating—and a special thank you to Joyce and Dave Jones for being mistress and master of ceremonies for this fun event.

Telecommuting Toolkit for Cancer Registrars

The Education Foundation held a roundtable at the NCRA Annual Educational Conference to introduce a new tool for cancer registrars who'd like to work from home. The Telecommuting Toolkit for Cancer Registrars provides information you can share with your administration to highlight how telecommuting can be beneficial to your organization. Attendees had wonderful things to say about the new tool—check it out at www.ncraeducationfoundation.org/links.html.

Watch for a future article on the telecommuting survey that the Education Foundation conducted earlier this year.

Health Careers Information Centers

The Education Foundation could use your assistance in supporting the advancement of the cancer registry profession! Does your state have a health careers information center or website? For instance, Wisconsin has a website that lists and describes more than 60 healthcare professions, and it includes the Certified Tumor Registrar: www.wihealthcareers.org/Career_occ_view2.cfm?o_id=100. If you know of a website like this, please contact me at sara.biese@hshs.org. We’d love to post information about registrars on as many sites as possible.
Chufar Scholarship Award Essay

What Impact Will the Transition to AJCC TNM and Summary Stage Have on Cancer Registrars?

CHERYL VARELA, CTR | LEAD CANCER REGISTRAR, BOULDER COMMUNITY HEALTH
Recipient of the 2015 Danielle Chufar Memorial Annual Conference Scholarship

In 2016, the Collaborative Staging v2 system will convert to the AJCC TNM Staging standard. According to the third edition of Cancer Registry Principles and Practices for Hospitals and Central Registries, “Cancer staging is important for the medical practitioner to adequately assess the extent of cancer to treat the disease in the most appropriate manner.” The changes in cancer staging that are taking place in 2016 will affect US cancer registries in many ways, including cancer registry data quality, productivity, and processes.

Data quality within the cancer registries refers to the overall ability of a cancer registry’s data to fulfill the needs of its users. The users of this data include, but are not limited to, CDC-NPCR, NCI-SEER, NAACCR, NCDB, researchers, and hospital physicians and administrators. Data quality relies on accuracy, completeness, timeliness, and consistency. To make data meaningful, we must adhere to the philosophy of “garbage in—garbage out.” To do this, we will have to focus on training all registrars. To identify training needs, we will need to create cross-reference charts that show how data items were collected in the past, and compare that data to how the data items are now collected. Competencies that focus on the understanding of the new data fields will be important for managers. Competency assessments will evaluate registrars’ understanding of the new data fields.

Productivity within cancer registries refers to timeliness, or the rate at which the registry collects data on reportable malignancies. Productivities within a cancer registry may also refer to the general management of the cancer program, including, but not limited to, assessing and reporting a cancer program’s adherence to CoC or NAACCR standards. To keep productivity and timeliness at an adequate level, education will need to be staggered throughout the year. The registries will have to evaluate how productivity is assessed as the new learning curve is implemented.

Processes with cancer registries refers to the overall operations within the cancer registry, including case finding, abstracting, staging, registrar education, cancer conferences, and monitoring cancer program adherence to standard setters’ requirements. It also includes the policies and procedures applicable to these operations. The most significant impact will be on the cancer registries that will have to re-evaluate and update their current quality-control policy and procedures.

In conclusion, the transition to AJCC TNM and SEER Summary Stage in 2016 will affect cancer registries in many ways. Data quality and productivity will be affected as the new learning curve takes place. Processes will be affected when policies and procedures are updated with the new competency assessments, quality-control strategies, and productivity standards. I started working in the registry field almost 15 years ago, and I have seen many changes—from ROADS to FORDS, from SEER Summary Stage to Collaborative Stage. Registrars are resilient and will be able to adapt and be successful with these changes, as we have been with past updates and modifications. Cancer registrars know that evolution is inevitable.

2016 Danielle Chufar Annual Conference Scholarship

Details on the 2016 scholarship, including the essay theme and application, will be available on the NCRA website, www.ncra-usa.org, this fall.
Greetings! It’s both a blessing and honor to be Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Registry Management* (JRM). I extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to our Editor Emeritus, Vicki Nelson, for all her hard work and dedication to NCRA and JRM.

I recently received my PhD in public health from University of South Florida, and I’m currently the Manager of Information Shared Services at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa. My introduction to the cancer registry world came when I was working with a cancer epidemiologist on a project analyzing SEER-Medicare linked data from patients diagnosed with primary malignant astrocytoma. It immediately piqued my interest and, 11 years later, I still have a personal mission to learn as much as I can. My volunteer experience with NCRA began four years ago serving as the Associate Editor of JRM. Our incoming Associate Editor, Jody Plantz, BS, CTR, is a cancer registrar at University of Colorado.

I encourage each of you to get involved with JRM by submitting a manuscript or article for publication. Do you have a quality control/assurance metric, a lesson learned from a registry management perspective, a process you’ve successfully implemented with your team, or a study that you or a team member conducted that could benefit others? Or maybe you have information to share about the sunset of Collaborative Staging, the transition to AJCC TNM Staging, or the sunrise of ICD-10? If so, please consider submitting a piece to JRM!

Contributed manuscripts are peer-reviewed prior to publication. Manuscripts of the following types may be submitted for publication:

1. Methodology Articles addressing topics of broad interest and appeal to the readership, including methodological aspects of registry organization and operation.
2. Research articles reporting findings of original, reviewed, data-based research.
3. Primers providing basic and comprehensive tutorials on relevant subjects.
4. “How I Do It” Articles describe tips, techniques, or procedures for an aspect of registry operations that the author does particularly well. The “How I Do It” feature in the *Journal* provides registrars with an informal forum for sharing strategies with colleagues in all types of registries.
5. Opinion papers/editorials including position papers, commentaries, essays, and interviews that analyze current or controversial issues and provide creative, reflective treatments of topics related to registry management.
6. Bibliographies which are specifically targeted and of significant interest will be considered.
7. Letters to the Editor are also invited.

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

Manuscript submission requirements are given in “Information for Authors” found on the inside back cover of each *Journal* and on the NCRA Web site at http://www.ncra-usa.org/jrm.
Mentoring

Mentoring in the CTR Profession: Four Areas You Should Know

TONI HARE, RHIT, CTR

During my 30 years of cancer registry experience, I've collected countless pieces of valuable cancer information and added them to the registry. Surely, the number of keystrokes I have made in this pursuit must number in the millions. This information, along with what has been collected by others like me, has contributed to our nation's collective understanding of cancer and how to most effectively treat it. For me, it’s hard to imagine another career path that provides an opportunity to be a part of something so meaningful. Who among us, after all, has not been impacted in some way by cancer? Who has not wondered if there was some way to join the fight against it?

Despite this deep connection with the purpose of my career, I encounter people all the time who think of my job as little more than sophisticated data entry. Of course, I know they’re wrong, but I often wonder if this perception will have an impact on our ability to maintain an adequate workforce in the future. Today, the bulk of cancer registrars are in the latter part of their careers and the number of new CTRs is not keeping up with demand. If we as cancer registrars do not recognize and act on our workforce challenges, our ability as a whole to impact the quality of cancer care will be compromised.

Certainly, there are many ways to promote our profession—like staying connected to our workplaces when working from home, participating in community groups, and joining professional organizations. For those of us with some experience under our belt, however, one of the best ways to promote the profession is by mentoring new registrars. If new registrars do not embrace the value of high-quality data or do not believe their work has meaning, they certainly won’t engender a deeper respect for the registry among those with whom they interact. They also won’t last very long in the field.

While mentoring is not typically a formal part of a CTR’s job responsibilities and does not require any specific credentials, those who are best suited tend to have a strong technical skill set, a passion for their career, and ample patience. Mentors can model the skills and behaviors that embody the successful and professional cancer registrar. In my many years as a mentor, I've found myself reinforcing some of the same ideas year after year. While the topics you may find yourself addressing as a mentor, self-confidence surfaces time and time again as an area of concern. New CTRs, like those new to any profession, can feel uncertain about the value of their contributions. For me, the time to help new registrars overcome these misgivings is very rewarding. I often work with new CTRs, demonstrating the confident behaviors I hope they embrace, allowing them to chime in when they are comfortable. I remind them that their contributions do make a difference and that their opinions do matter. Once they’ve found their voice, I back off, allowing them to become a strong and independent member of the healthcare team.

3. **Professionalism matters.** To garner the respect of the healthcare team, CTRs must exude professionalism in all they do. From the way we dress to the way we enter a room, do we slink in unseen or do we walk in with authority? The way we handle ourselves plays into our success and our ability to promote the cancer registry profession. As a mentor, I know it’s not only important to assist in strengthening technical skills but also to help promote the soft skills that are so important in any work environment.

4. **CTRs make a difference.** I believe in the work we do as cancer registrars, and sharing that passion with others in the field helps me stay connected to the reasons I followed this career path to begin with. Our work is changing the care of cancer patients. It’s easy to be inspired by that and it’s easy to work harder if that’s why you’re working. Making sure my mentees understand that is probably the most important lesson I can impart and the most meaningful way I can contribute to promoting the cancer registry profession.

If you're interested in mentoring other CTRs, there are many resources available, including NCRA's mentoring program. The program, available in the Careers/Workforce section of NCRA's website, matches mentors—in this case, NCRA members in good standing who have held the CTR credential for at least two years—with mentees. In addition to the many intrinsic benefits outlined above, mentors participating in this program can earn CEs for their volunteer efforts.

Whether via NCRA's structured mentoring program or through a less formal route, mentoring is a meaningful way to impact the cancer registry field. It reinforces the importance of the work we do as cancer registrars among those new to the field, increases job satisfaction, and promotes a strong registry workforce. And while these are certainly very important, for me, mentoring offers a constant reminder of the reason I originally decided to follow this career path: to make a meaningful difference in the fight against cancer.

Toni Hare, RHIT, CTR, is vice president of CHAMPS Oncology and a CoC-trained consultant with over 30 years of experience in the cancer registry field. She is a progressive enthusiast for quality cancer information and never stops promoting the importance of education in the profession.
Get Ready for the Transition!

NCRA’s Latest Publication Provides Registrars the Opportunity to Practice Assigning AJCC TNM Stage and Coding SEER Summary Stage.

Go to www.ncra-usa.org/casestudies to order!
New CTRs

Candidates took the spring 2015 CTR exam at testing centers worldwide during the February 28–March 21 testing window. Sixty-seven candidates passed the exam and formally became Certified Tumor Registrars. NCRA's Council on Certification proudly congratulates all new CTRs!

**California**
Tracy Dicalogero, Modesto
David Purdy, Los Angeles

**Colorado**
Michele Anders, Greeley
Brenton Shaw, Lakewood
Cynthia Thibault, Loveland
Janet Webb, Denver

**Connecticut**
Sara Burns, New Britain
Tammy Lepisto, Clinton
Lourdes Lopes, West Hartford

**Delaware**
Marie Michael, Georgetown

**Florida**
Kathryn Murphy, Tampa
Jennifer Vazquez, Orlando
Paula Ward, Tampa
Lucas Wassira, Jacksonville

**Georgia**
Cherry Fitton, Richmond Hill
Gisela Mendizabal, Jonesboro
Kelley Noorbakhsh, Decatur
Erica Oliver, Warner Robins
Rebecca Rollins, Newnan
Iris Simpson, Tifton
Dana Wilhite, Bethlehem

**Illinois**
Elizabeth Campbell, West Chicago
Laura Carnine, Mount Vernon
Angela George, Springfield
Susan Hageman, Dixon
Amber Mack, Chicago
Clomene Prophete, Forest Park
Jennifer Roese, Schaumburg
Suzette Swanson, Dunlap

**Indiana**
Leslie Woodard, Avon

**Kentucky**
Michelle McCormick, Louisville

**Louisiana**
Cassandra Phillips, Shreveport

**Massachusetts**
Caroline Adiwijaya, Belmont
Dawn Loomis, Seekonk

**Maine**
Ava Sweeney, Portland

**Michigan**
Donna Anastasia, Canton
Lynnea Malatinsky, Owosso
Sharon Simpson, Oak Park

**Minnesota**
Jacqueline Ebensteiner, Alexandria

**Missouri**
Patricia Hamlet, Reeds Spring

**Mississippi**
Courtney Browning, New Albany
Ashanti Greenwood, McComb

**North Carolina**
Jessica Rollings, Wilmington

**New Jersey**
Stephanie Blassmann, Marlton
Luan Tosuni, Hackensack

**New Mexico**
Laurilee Roybal, Albuquerque
Angela Valenzuela, Albuquerque

**New York**
Heidi Shader, Hudson

**Ohio**
Diane Fawley, Wilmington
Allen Null, Lakewood

**Oklahoma**
Stacey Hibbets, Oklahoma City

**Oregon**
Melissa Chalker, Redmond
Joan Miller, Damascus

**Pennsylvania**
Julia Abel, Shillington
Rebecca Bopp, Pittsburgh
Lori Johnson, Oakdale

**South Carolina**
Lakeisha Nedwards, Fountain Inn

**Tennessee**
Tammy Clark, Murfreesboro
Stacie Perkins, Smyrna
Amy Quillin, White House

**Texas**
Rocio Calvillo, El Paso

**Utah**
Derek Jensen, Ogden

**Virginia**
Celinda Stanley, Winchester

**Wisconsin**
Theresa Hansen, Kewaskum
Lori Walters, Green Bay

**West Virginia**
Brooke Beckman, Pleasant Valley
The North American Association of Central Cancer Registries (NAACCR) held its annual conference June 15–19 in Charlotte, North Carolina. NAACCR President Jill MacKinnon noted the relevance of this year’s location and theme, First in Flight: Launching a New Era in Cancer Surveillance: “Capturing the Wright brothers’ spirit, Charlotte is the perfect place to showcase our new flying machines … that is, our advances in cancer surveillance and control through new approaches, new methodology, new partners, and new technology.” The conference’s overall goals were reflected in its plenary themes, which included “Launching a New Era in Cancer Research,” “Big Data,” “Launching a New Era of Registry Operations,” and “Intersection of Public Health and Surveillance and Clinical Medicine.”

In his presentation, Unleashing “Big Data” in Oncology, Dr. Robert Green, Vice President of Clinical Strategy at Flatiron Health, said the “… availability of patient data must be met with the ability to interpret and use these data in a meaningful way. … However, the key feature needed for success is the ability to capture high-quality patient data, both structured and unstructured, that we can then de-identify and reanalyze for multiple purposes.” Sound familiar? Flatiron collects more data than most cancer registries (a cancer registry on steroids!), but all of the information in Dr. Green’s presentation would certainly be familiar to any cancer registrar.

Randi Rycroft, Director of the Colorado Central Cancer Registry, presented Launching a New Era in Registry Operations: Survivorship Care Plans. She described how her registry, working with providers, developed a process that uses state registry data to populate most of a patient’s treatment summary and follow-up care plan. This process makes it easier for health care providers to create these items, while the information entered by the providers enhances the registry data.

There were several concurrent sessions at the conference; the following are highlights from a few that I attended:

- **Launching a New Era of Surveillance: Biomarkers and Prognostic Indicators**
  - Presenters discussed a process to evaluate an assessment of the CS SSFs, a review of oncology practice guidelines and factors of emerging clinical importance. The conclusion was that the process provided an evidence-based and practical approach to make decisions about the collection of biomarkers and prognostic indicators in the future.

- **Evaluation of Completeness of Lymph Node Count in the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries for Selected Cancers**
  - 73,911 female breast cases, 5,522 non-small-cell lung carcinoma, and 149,601 colon cases diagnosed 2007–2011, first primaries, Stage I-III from multiple state registries were included.
  - Registries with 100% unknown/blank information for “regional nodes examined” were excluded.
  - Cases reported from non-metropolitan areas had higher percentages of unknown/blank information.

- **New Era in Research: Cervical Cancer Surveillance**
  - CDC funded four population-based cancer registries (Louisiana, Kentucky, Michigan, and Los Angeles County) to collect and report pre-invasive cervical disease.
  - Pre-invasive cervical disease includes one or more of the following: cervical intraepithelial neoplasia, grade three, carcinoma in situ, adenocarcinoma in situ and severe dysplasia.
  - The registries’ data will provide information to monitor the outcomes of the HPV vaccines.
  - Preliminary data analysis shows that pre-invasive cervical disease varies widely by registry: 17.8 per 100,000 in Los Angeles to 69.8 per 100,000 in Kentucky.
  - Pre-invasive cervical disease was most common among women aged 25–29.
  - White women in Kentucky and Louisiana had the highest rates, while rates were similar for both white and black women in Los Angeles County and Michigan.
  - Adenocarcinoma in situ was rarely diagnosed.
  - Variations between registries may be reflected in screening, pathology terminology, differences in the disease, and data collection.
  - The Kentucky Cancer Registry (KCR) is using the pre-invasive cervical data to study the variations in the HPV genotypes in its state. The KCR has expanded its electronic processes with laboratories for the reporting of pre-invasive cervical cases.

Other presentations covered topics such as trends of various cancer sites at different stages, meaningful use, death clearance, survival data, and new processes to expand electronic reporting. The conference offered several sessions discussing XML and HL7 as related to surveillance activities and one session that discussed an interface that can “code” from the text of diagnosing documents with a very high accuracy rate. Cancer reporting is steadily becoming almost completely electronic, and I believe that the job duties of registrars will evolve accordingly.

The NAACCR Annual Meeting is an educational conference for central cancer registries, but it offers many sessions that may be of interest to anyone in cancer surveillance, including hospital registrars.
2014–2015 Election Results

The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the results of the 2014-2015 Board of Directors, Nominating Committee, and Council on Certification elections. Congratulations to our newly elected leaders! We appreciate all who voted and participated as candidates.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President-Elect/Secretary
Linda Corrigan, MHE, RHIT, CTR

Treasurer Junior
Dana Lloyd, MS, RHIA, CTR

Educational Board Director
Paulette Zinkann, CTR

Recruitment and Retention Board Director
Janet Reynolds, CTR, BA

Advocacy & Technical Practice Board Director – East
Jayne Holubowsky, CTR

Advocacy & Technical Practice Board Director – Midwest
Maria Teresa Ramirez, BS, CTR

Advocacy & Technical Practice Board Director – West
Tiffany Janes, CTR

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Nominating Committee – East
Denise Hansen, BA, CTR
Jennie Jones, CTR

Nominating Committee – Midwest
Michele Beck, BTM, RHIT, CTR
Cynthia Evans, LVN, CTR

Nominating Committee – West
Winny Roshala, BA, CTR
Valerie Spadt, CTR

COUNCIL ON CERTIFICATION

Council on Certification Administrator
Kimberly Watson, CTR

Council on Certification Representatives
Danette Clark, BS, RMA, CTR
Vicki Hawhee, CTR
Vivian Heep, RHIT, CTR
Linda Shroyer, CTR

Special Notice: The Connection is Going Digital

The NCRA Board of Directors with the recommendation from The Connection Editorial Advisory Board has approved the conversion of The Connection newsletter from the “print/election format” to an “all-electronic” format. Beginning with the winter 2015-2016 issue, NCRA members will receive a link to The Connection by email instead of a printed copy. We will continue to notify members when the latest issue of the newsletter is posted on the NCRA website.

WHY MAKE THE CHANGE? We think that the time and money members entrusted the Association with can, and should be spent in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Our current mailing process takes up to two months to go from print to your mailbox and the electronic format provides you with important NCRA and industry news in half the time for a fraction of the cost. An electronic format will also allow NCRA to provide you with more interactive tools and links to resources on the website.

HOW YOU CAN HELP - To make sure you receive the notice for the electronic version of The Connection, please make sure we have a valid email address on file for you. We will continue to post the current edition of The Connection on the NCRA website. Look for the banner on the website to link directly to the current issue. You may also learn how to sign up for electronic publications at www.ncra-usa.org/epublications.
Will You Join the 2016 Race?

JANICE N. WHITE, EDM, RHIA, CMRS, CPC, CTR | NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR

NCRA is looking ahead to the 2016 elections—and invites you to participate in the process, either as a candidate or by nominating a deserving colleague. Serving as a volunteer for NCRA is a rewarding experience. You’ll help 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 while growing your career. You’ll also interact with peers around the country who can help you in the future as colleagues, friends, and mentors.

If you’re unable to serve NCRA this coming year in this capacity, please consider nominating another member with great leadership skills (with her/his permission) for an office. Either way, you’ll get a feeling of accomplishment knowing that you’re serving NCRA—and yourself.

We are seeking to fill the following positions in the 2016 election:

BOARD POSITIONS

- President-Elect/Secretary (one-year term with rollup to President)
- Treasurer Junior (one-year term with rollup to Treasurer Senior)
- Public Relations Board Director (two-year term)
- Professional Development Board Director (two-year term)

COUNCIL ON CERTIFICATION POSITIONS

- Council on Certification Representatives (four positions, each having a two-year term)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE POSITIONS

- Nominating Committee Members – East Region (two positions, each having a one-year term)
- Nominating Committee Members – Midwest Region (two positions, each having a one-year term)
- Nominating Committee Members – West Region (two positions, each having a one-year term)

To learn about the duties and time required for Board positions, please visit www.ncra-usa.org/BoDPresentations.

You’ll find more information, including position descriptions and online submission forms, at www.ncra-usa.org/nominations.

The correct credentials in the winter 2014-15 issue on page 6 should have been Carole Eberle, BS, CTR.
Welcome to the New Members
Who Joined NCRA March – May 2015

Donna M. Ahearn
Geraldine M. Allegrino
Prudence Ashley
Catherine M. Ayres
Gidget C. Barth
Andrea Bauerle
McKenzie Bedra
Mary E. Bell
Candra L. Bell
Margaret M. Bertin
Rachel R. Bifelt
Steve Blumberg
Lisa D. Boster
Karen L. Brant
Susanna Britt
Catherine Brooks
Jennifer L. Brown
Ann-Marie Burley
Sherry Butler
Renata F. Caldwell
Theresa Casperson
Laura Castro
Brenda Chestnut-Young
Sarah M. Childress
Jilliane G. Coots
Sharon Davis
Erdenetsetseg Dixon
Wendell Eads
Andrea Easterwood
Tammy Eblin
Shahin Emami
Mary Katie Fahey
Elrena Farring
Lisa Floyd
Kathy D. Fors
Adrienne Fung
Jennifer W. Fuquay
Erin Gay
Katherine Gilbertson
Maria Giron-Carrillo
Heather K. Graham
Ginger Greenwood
Jodi Guenther
Alesia D. Guzman
Tara H. Hamp
Constance Harris
Kimberly B. Harris
Savina M. Hernandez
Taylor Hessler
Stephanie K. Hiett
Ting Jin
Kylee Johnson
Kelly Johnson
Sharin Kangarovich
Sarah Karnes
Debra Kazaitis
Mary L. Kenoyer
Carrie Kimes
Melissa A. Krug
Martha M. Kruse
Emily Kuemning
Jessica Leopold
Christina Lombardino
Scranton, PA
Binghamton, NY
Winter Haven, FL
Hanover, NH
Vancouver, WA
Decatur, IL
Glen Burnie, MD
Ithaca, NY
Newport News, VA
White Lake, MI
Topeka, KS
Plymouth, MA
Franklin, OH
Charleroi, PA
Pittsburgh, PA
Valrico, FL
Silver Spring, MD
Portsmouth, NH
Zanesville, OH
Lithonia, GA
Olympia, WA
Tyler, TX
Thomasville, NC
Somerst, KY
Scottsdale, AZ
Garner, NC
Bainbridge, GA
Dallas, TX
Maumee, OH
Glascow, KY
San Jose, CA
Wilmington, DE
Anchorage, AK
North Augusta, SC
Springsdale, AR
Cedar Park, TX
Varina, NC
Nassau, BS
Byron, MN
Maywood, IL
Camby, IN
Alma, MI
Rochester, MN
Anaheim, CA
Springfield, MO
Hamden, CT
Concord, NH
El Cajon, CA
Sewell, NJ
Bedford, TX
Northville, MI
Carmel, IN
Yonkers, NY
Irvine, CA
Durango, CO
Palos Park, IL
Monterey, CA
Grove City, PA
Indianapolis, IN
Bowling Green, OH
Whitewater, WI
Lake Worth, FL
Richmond Hill, NY
Deborah Lund
Stephanie L. Manuel
Priscilla Martin
Nicole Matejk
Tracy L. Mausteller
Ryan McCabe
Sandra McDonald
Stephanie McDonald
Robin L. McIntosh
Traci McLaughlin
Shivon M. McLeod
Debra Meinhardt
Nancy Meyer
Keri N. Miller
Jennine Miranda
Cristina Moisa
Dorothy Monahan
Vanessa Montalvo
Thomas C. Moore
Adrienne Morth
Susan Moss
Gena Muller
Seema Muralidhar
Spencer Naegle
Majid Nasser
Laura S. Noble
Kimberly Nunez
Ashley Olson
Irene Oriordan
Marcella Os
Leta L. Pasternak
Shauntee Patterson
Heather L. Patton
Nicole Petersen
Tammy L. Petit
Alicia Price
Cheryl Prince
Denise Proper
Ivana Pupovac
Leslie Randall-Greenwood
Irene Rava
Jan Richards
Syeda HassanRizvi
Michelle Robinson
Rhonda, Roos
Jessica Ross
Laura Ruppert
Irene A. Sarmiento
Saras D. Schmitt
Susan M. Seminazzi
Xuejun Shen
Kathleen Simmet
Sara Sutter
Mohammad Talpur
Melv B. Thomas
Tammy Tisdale
Nicole S. Tomarchio
Juana E. Torres
Terry Waters
Terri Williams
Rachel Winn
Richard Wood
Kate Wright
Larisa Zmyro

WHO JOINED NCRA MARCH – MAY 2015

Richmond Hill, NY

Dwight, IL
Palmdale, CA
Washington, DC
Inver Grove Heights, MN
Louisville, KY
Chicago, IL
Tucson, AZ
Warrenton, OR
Fort Collins, CO
Newnan, GA
Brooklyn, NY
Citronelle, AL
Hickory, NC
Anchorage, AK
Los Angeles, CA
Ann Arbor, MI
Jupiter, FL
Brooklyn, NY
Cincinnati, OH
Boynton Beach, FL
Seattle, WA
Viroqua, WI
Suwanee, GA
Orlando, FL
Jeddah, SA
Tacoa, WA
Jonesboro, AR
Cheyenne, WY
Evergreen Park, IL
Levittown, NY
Morris, NY
Lynchburg, VA
Louisville, KY
West Fargo, ND
Vineland, NJ
Detroit, MI
Memphis, TN
Eagle, MI
Kenosha, WI
Santa Rosa, CA
Hillsborough, NJ
Windsor, PA
Bellrose, NY
Southold, NY
Romneville, IL
Pasadena, CA
Indianapolis, IN
Woodland Hills, CA
Adamsburg, PA
Cocoa, FL
Montgomery, AL
Green Bay, WI
Elk Grove, CA
Houston, TX
Memphis, TN
Toledo, OH
New Britain, CT
Bayamon, PR
Riverside, CA
Beverly Hills, CA
Grand Haven, MI
Greely, CO
Kansas, OK
Lubbock, TX
Elizabeth, CO
Victorville, CA
Brooklyn, NY
NCRA revised its popular study guide for the 2015 exam. There are five new case studies that include answers with rationales. Companion CD contains additional study resources. NCRA member price: $85; non-member price: $105.

2015 Fall CTR Exam Prep Online Workshop
NCRA’s CTR Exam Prep Online Workshop consists of nine, 90-minute LIVE webinars on critical exam topics. Workshop member price: $365; non-member price: $485: Individual webinars can be purchased separately. Member price: $45; non-member price: $60.

Archived CTR Exam Prep Webinars
The recent online CTR Exam Prep webinars have been archived and are now available on NCRA’s Center for Cancer Registry Education. These webinars address critical exam topics. Each webinar is $25 for NCRA members; $40 for non-members.

Special Compilation of Collaborative Stage Data Collection System Coding Instructions
(For 2015 CTR Exam Candidates Only)
NCRA has compiled the specific sites of the Collaborative Stage Data Collection System Coding Instructions to be used during the open-book portion of the exam. This easy-to-use special edition includes the five specific sites: bladder, breast, colon, lung, and prostate. NCRA member price: $50; non-member price: $75.

UPDATED FOR 2015!
NCRA’s Online CTR Exam Practice Test
NCRA offers a 125-question online CTR Exam Practice Test through its Center for Cancer Registry Education (CCRE). The Practice Test is designed to provide candidates a tool to assess understanding and determine where further study is needed. Pricing options: One-time access: NCRA member - $65; non-member - $105. Unlimited access for 60 days: NCRA member - $180; non-member - $220.

Go to www.ncra-usa.org/CTRPrep to learn more and order!