

## **The National Cancer Registrars Association Awarded Cooperative Agreement with the CDC to Enhance Cancer Data Collection and Showcase its Use in Improving Public Health**

### *Initiatives to Focus on Cancer Registry Workforce Readiness, Recruitment, and Retention*

Alexandria, VA (November 17, 2011)—The National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA) was awarded a \$1million, five-year cooperative agreement from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Program of Cancer Registries (CDC, NPCR) to launch innovative efforts to enhance cancer surveillance data collection and use through workforce readiness, recruitment and retention. Key components of the program include: high-quality, cost-effective training to cancer surveillance professionals, recruitment and retention initiatives to ensure a steady supply of highly skilled cancer surveillance professionals, and marketing and communications programs to increase awareness of the profession and the role cancer data collection plays to benefit public health.

Cancer registrars are medical data specialists that collect, code, and report on cancer data used by researchers, healthcare providers, and health officials to advance cancer detection, treatment, and prevention. NCRA offers an array of educational programming to prepare cancer registrars to provide accurate and timely data collection and adapt to changes in standards and technologies. NCRA also certifies registrars. As the demand for cancer registry professionals increases, developing innovative and easily accessible training is needed to educate the next generation of cancer registrars.

“This cooperative agreement with CDC, NPCR enhances a decade-long partnership with NCRA where the two organizations have found common ground in addressing issues that are pivotal to the future of cancer surveillance,” said Melanie. W. Rogan, CTR, President, NCRA. “With this support, NCRA can build upon its existing resources to develop innovative new training programs and promote the profession to help meet the increasing demand for well-qualified cancer registrars.”

A key component of the program is the design and implementation of a Learning Content Management System (LCMS) that will include a centralized online knowledge center that automates the administration, tracking, and reporting of all NCRA training opportunities, as well as the educational programs of partner organizations. The goal of the LCMS is to provide a one-stop information site for cancer surveillance professionals to find cost-effective educational materials to keep current on changes in the field and ensure their skills remain up-to date.

In addition to its support of high-quality training, the agreement will also fund initiatives to raise awareness about the profession and its role in improving public health. This will be accomplished through: articles in NCRA publications and industry-related journals that highlight the CDC, NPCR data and how it is used to inform public health programming, expansion of activities related to National Cancer Registrars Week, and creating a *Cancer Surveillance Workforce Toolkit* for Health Information Management (HIM) schools to enhance instructor resources and student knowledge of the profession. Many of the materials provided will illustrate how the NPCR data is utilized for public health benefit.

“The critical role cancer registrars play in the fight against cancer is not known well-enough outside the profession. Our goal is to increase the visibility of cancer registrars and registry data that showcase the work of cancer registrars and how the CDC, NPCR data they collect and report leads to important decisions about cancer prevention, detection, and treatment. These initiatives will support the recruitment and retention of cancer registrars and better inform the public about the key part they play in our collective efforts to prevent and treat cancer,” noted Lori Swain, NCRA’s Executive Director.

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### **National Cancer Registrars Association**

Chartered in May 1974, the National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA) is a non-profit organization that represents more than 5,000 cancer registry professionals and Certified Tumor Registrars (CTRs). Its mission is to promote education, credentialing, and advocacy for cancer registry professionals. Cancer registrars capture a complete summary of patient history, diagnosis, treatment, and status for every cancer patient in the United States, and other countries as well. Cancer registrars hope their work will lead to better treatments, and ultimately, a cure. For more information about NCRA, visit [www.ncra-usa.org](http://www.ncra-usa.org).

### **National Program of Cancer Registries**

Established by Congress through the Cancer Registries Amendment Act in 1992, and administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Program of Cancer Registries (NPCR) collects data on the occurrence of cancer; the type, extent, and location of the cancer; and the type of initial treatment. Before NPCR was established, 10 states had no registry, and most states with registries lacked the resources and legislative support they needed to gather complete data. Today, NPCR supports central cancer registries in 45 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Pacific Island Jurisdictions. These data represent 96 percent of the U.S. population. Together, NPCR and the National Cancer Institute’s Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program collect data for the entire U.S. population. For more information about NPCR, visit [www.cdc.gov/cancer/npcr](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/npcr).