



The Cancer Registrar and Your Community

According to the National Institutes of Health, cancer is the second leading cause of death among Americans. Doctors, researchers, and public health officials are working endlessly to change this fact by improving cancer prevention and treatment, but ultimately hoping to find a cure for cancer. The starting point for the work of doctors, researchers and public health officials is the **Cancer Registrar**.

All over America, and in your community, **Cancer Registrars** are working to gather information from every cancer patient on all aspects of their disease. As each patient's data becomes combined with that from other patients, and from other communities, the entire medical community now can understand more and more about cancer. Here are examples of how the **Cancer Registrar's** work has helped the fight against cancer:

- **Kentucky:** In the early 1990's Cancer Registry data were used to identify areas of the state that had high rates of late-stage and low rates of early stage breast cancer. As a result, Kentucky expanded mammography outreach activities in these communities. By 1996, the percentage of Kentucky women diagnosed with late stage breast cancer had declined to 30%. *By detecting these cancers early, thousands of lives were spared and an estimated \$4.7 million in treatment expenditures was saved.*
- **Arizona:** Cancer Registry Data on the stage of cancer at diagnosis were coded and analyzed by zip code, whereby the northeastern part of the state was found to have the highest percentage of breast cancer cases diagnosed at a late stage - 42% compared to the state average of 30%. *Using data from its cancer registry to identify areas with the highest levels of late stage breast cancer, additional outreach efforts encouraging breast cancer screening were planned.*
- **Minnesota:** Cancer Registry Data showed a persistent excess of a rare cancer, mesothelioma, in the northeastern portion of the state. This rare type of cancer has only one known cause - asbestos exposure. *This revealing observation resulted in legislative funding for investigations to look for cases of other occupation-related disease.*
- **Kansas:** With Cancer Registry data that examined cancer care in various communities, hospital administrators and physicians concluded that people in certain locations lacked access to radiation treatment centers and clinics. *Cancer registry data was able to pinpoint communities needing cancer care facilities and as a result, new facilities were opened in those areas.*
- **New York:** Cancer incidence data was collected locally and sorted by zip code. *Employing data from the Cancer Registry and state-of-the-art mapping techniques now show the distribution of cancer risk factors statewide to educate the public.*

All state specific examples are derived from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's publication Cancer Registries: The Foundation for Cancer Prevention and Control - At A Glance 2001 Atlanta, Georgia: Department of Health and Human Services, 2001.

This Fact Sheet is brought to you by the National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA), a nonprofit organization supporting the education and professional development of nearly 4,000 Cancer Registry professionals. To learn more about the Cancer Registry, the Cancer Registrar and NCRA, visit www.ncra-usa.org.

Fact Sheet