

Texas Cancer Reporting News

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Texas Cancer Registry

Texas Department of State Health Services

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TCR Updates

*Fond Farewell by Melanie Williams PhD;
Reporting Calendar by Allison Vasquez, BS, CTR and Martha Baker*

Dear Texas Cancer Reporting Community,

I wanted to let you all know that I will be retiring the end of November 2022 after more than 20 years with the Texas Cancer Registry. It has been such an honor to work with you all and my appreciation for what you do will never end. As many of you know, my working here is very personal; both of my parents are in the Texas Cancer Registry. Words just do not adequately express how much I appreciate the dedication and support you all provide for both the Texas Cancer Registry and fighting cancer overall.

We will make the leadership transition as smooth as possible and will keep you all posted. Again, my sincere thanks and gratitude for having the opportunity to work with you all. It has been an honor.

Sincerely,
Melanie

Timely Reporting Calendars for 2021 and 2022

We thank all Texas Cancer Reporters for your flexibility with the modified timely reporting calendars for cases admitted between 2018-2020. There have been no modifications to the 2021 or 2022 reporting calendars. Both the 2021 and 2022 reporting calendars follow TCR's standard policy of reporting cases within six months.

- [2021 Timely Reporting Calendar](#)
- [2022 Timely Reporting Calendar](#)

Want to stay on top of TCR's most recent publications?

Our [homepage](#) features a list of our latest publications, statistical tables, and reports under *Recent Additions*.

What's New for 2022!

By Elizabeth Harvey, BS, CTR

The Texas Cancer Registry (TCR) is proud to become a part of the National Cancer Institute's Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) Program as of May 2021. This transition will require several exciting changes.

TCR started the migration process to SEER*DMS, a new and improved cancer registry software system. We have created several new TCR staff positions to meet SEER requirements and will be participating in various special projects, such as the National Childhood Cancer Registry.

The biggest change affects you as a Texas cancer reporter; TCR will begin collecting additional SEER required data items for cases diagnosed Jan. 1, 2022 and forward.

The recently published [2022 TCR Cancer Reporting Handbook](#) includes these additional SEER data items, along with detailed instructions linking to necessary reporting resources and examples to assist you in accurate and consistent coding.

Posted on the TCR webpage for reporter updates is the list of 2022 New SEER Data Items. A Comparison of Data Sets of all the data items required by TCR is in the [2022 Cancer Reporting Handbook, Appendix D](#).

- Data items for TNM have remained the same. TCR requires TNM data items for analytical cases from facilities accredited by the American College of Surgeons. For facilities that are not accredited, TNM data items are not required.
- Radiation data items are required when the information is available.
- TCR will be collecting COVID-19 information, but only in text documentation fields.
- TCR will begin collecting additional SSDIs required by SEER on cases diagnosed Jan. 1, 2022 and forward only.
- Web Plus V22 does not have date-specific edits for the SEER SSDIs and the Mets at Dx data items turned on at this time since they were required by SEER prior to 2022 but not collected by the TCR until Jan. 1, 2022. This issue should hopefully be addressed in the upcoming metafile (V23) that releases in September.

You asked. We answered.

The Texas Cancer Registry recently sponsored the [2022 Statewide Training](#) with Denise Harrison and Louanne Currence. This six-part webinar presentation was a great source of advanced and intermediate training for Texas reporters. This year the series concluded with a three-hour interactive and informative Q&A segment.

Here is one of the questions from that segment. Check out the [2022 Statewide Training](#) for access to more of the Q&A and the complete webinar series.

Question: "Most of us can record each operative episode separately on our registry software. We code surgical simple mastectomy with SLN bx on one line and then the axillary dissection alone on another line. How does TCR handle this at their end?"

Answer: TCR receives the highest code for each procedure. Reporters should go back and update the code for the breast surgery to the MRM once the ALND is performed. If registry software allows only one procedure to be collected, document the most cumulative and invasive surgical procedure of the primary site.



Have questions about TCR education and training opportunities?

Email us at TCR.training@dshs.texas.gov

Epidemiology Corner

By Erin Gardner, MPH

Texas Cancer Registry Participation in NAACCR's Virtual Pooled Registry–Cancer Linkage System

The TCR regularly provides data for a variety of local and national cohort research studies in which study participants are followed over years or decades to see how they fare health wise. The researchers responsible for these cohort studies are seeking information on cancer outcomes for study participants, oftentimes to determine whether certain factors, both modifiable and non-modifiable, are associated with a higher risk of cancer.

Members of the TCR Epidemiology Team gather information such as name, date of birth, and address, from a researcher's list of participants and find matches in the TCR. This process is referred to as data linkage. Going through each record one by one is impossible, so we use software such as Match*Pro. Match*Pro allows us to view the most likely matches all the way down to the least likely matches. We make final determinations based on what we see and then release record-level tumor information for patients who matched, provided the application for data is approved by the DSHS Institutional Review Board (IRB).

VPR-CLS Spotlight

Childhood Cancer Survivor Study (CCSS) – Based out of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, CCSS aims to understand how the diagnosis of childhood cancer and any associated treatments impact the long-term health of survivors. Through the VPR-CLS, the TCR provided data on subsequent tumors among CCSS participants in 2021.

Find more about the CCSS here: ccss.stjude.org/

When researchers want to link study cohorts with multiple cancer registries, there is a large administrative burden involved when working through the various approval processes for data release required by each registry. There can also be a lack of consistency in how data linkage is performed across registries; the way TCR sets up a linkage in Match*Pro might differ from another registry, and another might use a completely different linking software. NAACCR's Virtual Pooled Registry–Cancer Linkage System (VPR-CLS) seeks to: 1) streamline administrative processes using a single, centralized application system and IRB review, and 2) standardize the data linkage process for a single cohort across multiple registries.

For each linkage request, NAACCR provides a secure central platform for registries to download the list of participants, a linkage configuration (what tells Match*Pro how to process the two linkage datasets and present the data to registry staff), and instructions for completing the linkage. Whether record-level data can be released is up to each registry and their state's policies. We at TCR are permitted to conduct the linkage and release a count of matches, that way the researchers can determine whether they want to proceed with an application to the DSHS IRB to obtain the record-level data.

Since 2017, the TCR has participated in piloting the VPR-CLS initiative, and as of this year the VPR-CLS is fully operational and ready to handle numerous requests per year. We hope many more cohort studies begin to participate in the VPR-CLS so the utility of TCR data in research studies can be maximized at the national level.



Coding in Practice

At TCR we recently completed an NPCR Data Quality Evaluation for these primary sites:

- Esophagus
- Stomach
- Liver/Intrahepatic Bile Duct
- Brain
- Thyroid

Based on the feedback from this data review TCR has developed new Beyond the Basics Guides for critical data items related to each site. Our goal is to provide a resource that will clarify complicated rules that lead to common miscodes by highlighting specific miscoding examples, scenarios related to miscodes, and the rationales for the correct codes.

Our first [Beyond the Basics Guide](#) is focused on Tumor Size--Clinical (pre-treatment) which is a critical data item indicating the size of a solid primary tumor by assessing all the information available during the workup and diagnostic confirmation of that primary tumor. This information can be derived from pre-treatment:

- Physician PE(s) with gross descriptions of the tumor Imaging report(s)
- Pathological findings from a surgical exploration without resection

We chose Tumor Size--Clinical because it is a foundational data item used by:

- Facility abstractors when assigning staging
- Physicians when determining the efficacy of cancer treatment protocols
- Epidemiologists when calculating statistical analysis

At TCR we understand the volume of data CTRs digest every day and how precious your abstracting time is, so we don't want you wasting it tracking down information! We hope these Beyond the Basics Guides will help you increase both your abstracting efficiency and accuracy daily. We look forward to receiving your feedback.

Wishing you all happy coding out there in our big, beautiful state of Texas!

CTRs can find the complete expanded guidance here:

- [SEER Program Coding & Staging Manual 2022](#)
- [SEER Program Coding & Staging Manual 2018](#)

Educational and Training Opportunities

TCR offers several training webinars year around to help keep up with the changes of ever-evolving cancer reporting. The [FlccSC](#) is a stand-alone web-based Learning Management System that allows us to customize courses to address the specific needs of reporters, keeping up with that demand.

We use [FlccSC](#) to develop and maintain state-specific educational courses for our Texas reporters and to share important cancer reporting updates.

The available courses range from basic cancer coding for new reporters to advanced abstracting for seasoned reporters. Some of these courses offer CEs when completed by a deadline. We also offer important information regarding changes for reporting and the required data items per the reportable diagnosis year.

[FlccSC](#) is free for Texas reporters and available 24 hours a day. Users can enroll and learn at their own pace. Our current courses include:

- 2022 TCR Reporting Updates
- 2022 TCR Required Data Items
- TCR Cancer Reporting Resources 2022
- 2022 TCR Training Series (12 webinars)
- 2022 Statewide Training (6 webinars)

More Training News

The 2022 SEER Advanced Topics for Registry Professionals Workshop registration is now open. This workshop is free and open to all cancer registrars and will be held virtually on Tuesday-Thursday, Sept. 20-22, 2022, from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Participants must complete assigned cases in SEER*Educate before the workshop. For more information about the SEER*Educate cases, go to their [Welcome page](#).

The workshop is complimentary, but registration is required. Please visit [NCRA's website](#) to register for the workshop before September 16, 2022.

Email TCR.training@dshs.texas.gov with any questions.



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