



Iowa Cancer Registry

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MEMORANDUM

June 22, 2020

To: All Facilities/Entities Reporting Cancer Data to the Iowa Cancer Registry/State Health Registry of Iowa

Re: Required Cancer Data Collection Related to COVID-19

Since 1982, cancer has been a reportable disease in Iowa. Each occurrence of a reportable cancer that is diagnosed or treated in an Iowa resident or occurs in a nonresident who is diagnosed or treated in an Iowa facility shall be reported to the Iowa Cancer Registry (ICR)/State Health Registry of Iowa (SHRI), as authorized in the Iowa Administrative Code in Chapter 1, Section 641 – 1.4(139A). A reportable cancer means those cancers included in the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program. As stated in the code, occurrences of reportable cancers shall be reported by registrars employed by the ICR/SHRI, registrars employed by health care facilities, and health care providers involved in the diagnosis, care, or treatment of individuals with a reportable cancer. Information reported to the ICR/SHRI shall include, but not be limited to, follow-up data and demographic, diagnostic, treatment, and other medical information.

As the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has taken its course, evidence is growing that cancer survivors are disproportionately affected by the virus, from an increased risk of poor outcomes if infected to increased barriers and challenges to receiving oncology care. Identifying unusual changes and differences in the patterns of cancer incidence and cancer care are long-stated and well-established goals of the SEER program. On June 5, 2020, the SEER program issued a requirement that Central Cancer Registries begin implementation of cancer data collection related to COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on cancer patients.

As an entity that reports cancer data to the Iowa Cancer Registry, we are requesting, **effective immediately**, that you collect and report the following COVID-19 related information to the ICR **for all cancer patients diagnosed January 1, 2020 or later**: SARS-CoV-2 laboratory tests, infection status, and delays or modifications of the cancer treatment plan. We are not asking you to go back and review any 2020 cases you have already abstracted and submitted. But, from this point forward, we ask that you report the requested information through direct abstraction of any COVID-19 data elements in the exact manner described and in the NAACCR text fields specifically indicated in the attached technical guidance document [COVID-19 Abstraction Guidance v1.0](#). As explained in this guidance document, COVID-19-related data should be reported in the indicated NAACCR text fields. Attached is an additional reference document on Best Practices for Text Field Documentation that has been updated to include specific instructions for COVID-19 abstraction. Both guidance documents are also available on the ICR website: <https://shri.public-health.uiowa.edu/registrars/>.

We are requesting that you begin abstracting the required COVID-19 data elements immediately using the guidance we have provided. The ICR will be providing support and training opportunities and is available to provide additional help for registrars as they collect this information. Please contact Bobbi Matt (bobbi-matt@uiowa.edu) or Lori Somers (lori-somers@uiowa.edu) with specific questions about coding COVID-19 data for cancer patients.

If you have any questions or concerns about this new data collection requirement, you can contact Charles Lynch, MD, PhD (charles-lynch@uiowa.edu), Principal Investigator and Medical Director of the ICR or Suzanne Bentler, PhD (suzanne-bentler@uiowa.edu), Director of ICR Operations. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for all of the work you do to help reduce the burden of cancer for Iowans.

Charles Lynch, MD, PhD
Principal Investigator &
Medical Director

Suzanne Bentler, PhD
Director of Operations