Improving Cancer Registry Data Quality and Productivity through Technology

› Introduction

In the summer of 2020, the Rapid Cancer Reporting System (RCRS) replaced the Rapid Quality Reporting System (RQRS) and National Cancer Database (NCDB) annual call for data submissions. The change requires cancer programs to submit cases two months from initial diagnosis, a modification that signaled a massive adjustment to previous protocols and the opportunity to transform cancer data management programs with more current data. Currency of data is more important than ever as it is also a requirement for accreditation from the Commission on Cancer (CoC).

The chasm between managing backlogs and current data will not simply be solved with adequate staffing and upgraded technology. Instead, cancer registry program owners need to determine key performance indicators to chart their path to success. Cancer facilities can benefit tremendously by utilizing key metrics to guide best practice process improvements and to identify every day educational opportunities to support a strong cancer registry team. Identifying opportunities starts with identifying the key performance indicators that are unique to the facility and subsequently using technology to collect the data to inform best practices is a multifaceted solution to address the complexities of the challenges facing cancer facilities.

Unleashing the value of cancer registry data begins with clear metrics to achieve and maintain currency.
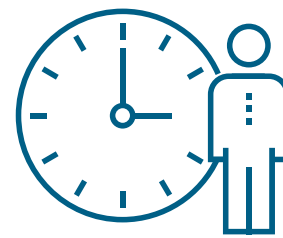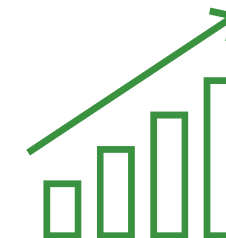
Goals
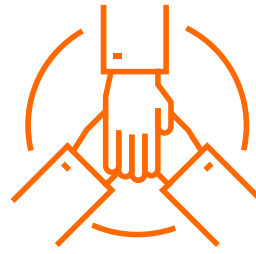
Well trained, expert program staff - engaged and collaborative team members

Consistent, clear, and tested efficiency metrics for the facility

Concurrent abstraction: staff time logs, review by case type, individual staff and team, and reduced case time

Cleared case backlog

Challenges

1. Lack of insight into the time it takes to complete one case
   - Few facilities engage technology to understand the efficiency of their staff
   - Dated technology does not track time to complete one case
   - Case backlogs
2. Inexperienced or over-burdened program staff
   - Considerations of number of EMRs and outside treatment
   - Additional cancer registry tasks
3. Dated technology built to address previous standards
4. Unclear or under-researched goals and metrics for facility

Solutions

1. Engage technology to log, monitor, and identify inconsistencies in case completion
   - Solutions can be simple or enhanced
   - Intuitive technology with enhanced monitoring capabilities will ensure continued currency and opportunities for improvement
2. Streamlined process for the lifecycle of a case
   - Develop streamlined process based on clear metrics to achieve goal
   - Streamlined processes allows for repetition, iterative learning for the staff promotes efficiency and helps reduce average case time
3. Outside expertise in clinical data and technology will provide an objective, accurate view of goals and gaps to goal

› Conclusion

Unleashing the full potential of a cancer registry program through current data can present challenges. The initial steps are to provide a clear path to success with key metrics. Clear metrics will result in a streamlined process that will offer the team members continued opportunity to iterate and improve. Mid to long terms effects become evident as the data backlogs diminish and data becomes more current. The clear communication of metrics and goals paired with continued data collection from enhanced technology will provide actionable insights for improved performance and care—ultimately, producing data with a purpose. If the challenge is too great, facilities can partner with external organizations to capture needed expertise and technology for ideal results.

QCentrix