

2021 NPCR ARIZONA SUCCESS STORY

Arizona Cancer Registry: Georgia Yee, CTR

Recruitment and Retention of Cancer Registrars for Central Registry Positions

National Program of Cancer Registries SUCCESS STORY

SUMMARY

Historically, the Arizona Cancer Registry (ACR) has found challenges in both the hiring of experienced cancer registrars and in retaining new cancer registrars once they have gained experience. What we believe contributed to this challenge is that hospital cancer registries in Arizona typically offer higher wages. Using information from the National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA) *Salary Considerations for Cancer Registrars, 2017 Survey Data* and information shared from major Arizona hospital systems, the ACR wrote a proposal to our internal agency Human Resources that thoroughly documented an evaluation of several internal cancer registrar positions. The ACR has successfully implemented new position descriptions that include a CTR requirement with an associated higher pay scale.

CHALLENGE

It has been difficult to attract experienced cancer registrars to Arizona Cancer Registry (ACR) positions. It has also been challenging to retain new cancer registrars once they have gained experience and are trained.

In addition, the ACR has also found it hard to consistently achieve the CDC NPCR Program Standards for the following performance measures:

- A designated certified tumor registrar (CTR) is responsible for the quality assurance program.
- Quality assurance activities should be conducted by qualified, experienced CTRs or CTR-eligible staff.
- A designated education and training coordinator who is a qualified, experienced CTR.

SOLUTION

We met with agency Human Resources and upper-management staff and shared concerns related to staff turnover and causes of employee separation. We submitted a proposal that included an extensive evaluation of positions that included the following:

- Explanations of how the positions are critical to the department's mission and vision
- Shared information related to the turnover rate for each of the positions
- Issues that turnover rates cause
- Average tenure for the positions

- Salary comparisons with the market
 - How does the Arizona Cancer Registry compare to other Arizona hospitals?
 - How does the Arizona Cancer Registry compare to other states?
- Position-specific barriers to recruitment
- An accounting of each cancer registrar budgeted position from year to year
- The time commitment needed to train new employees due to our complex training program

We were able to demonstrate how our positions are not comparable to hospitals or other central registries by using the last salary survey conducted by the NCRA and salary information provided by three local hospital systems.

RESULTS

We successfully revised the positions descriptions to include a CTR credential requirement. The requirement allows the employee to achieve the CTR credential within so many years of hire, depending upon what type of position they were hired into. We were able to revise all major positions, which include all registrars in the Operations section, the Operations Manager, the Quality Assurance Manager, as well as the Training Manager. In addition, we were able to increase the pay scale so that these positions would be comparable to hospital registry positions. A benefit to this is that we have started to attract Certified Tumor Registrars as well as Registered Health Information Technicians to positions. We now feel we have a solid foundation to recruit and retain cancer registrars.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

To sustain success, we must revisit position descriptions and the salary structure regularly to ensure that we offer a level of financial compensation in our positions within the central registry that is comparable to and competitive with hospital registrar pay and compensation. We also intend to pursue and develop other ways to make our positions more enticing to registrars in the long term, such as remote work opportunities and flexible schedules. In addition, we must continue to provide opportunities for employee engagement, so they feel invested in the activities of the registry and empowered in their positions. These elements work together to foster a positive culture and work environment, which is very important to the ACR and our agency.

REGISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

602-542-7320

<https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/public-health-statistics/cancer-registry/index.php>



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