

2020 NPCR MONTANA CENTRAL TUMOR REGISTRY SUCCESS STORY

STORY TOPIC: Recruitment of a Certified Tumor Registrar

STORY CATEGORY: Registry Operations

STORY TITLE: Specialized Job Classification as a Tool for Recruitment of Certified Tumor Registrars

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SUMMARY

One of the certified tumor registrars (CTRs) at the Montana Central Tumor Registry (MCTR) retired in December 2019. The first attempt to hire a new CTR yielded no qualified applicants after 4 months. Feedback from hospital CTRs informed us that they had not applied despite being interested in the position because it would require them to take a pay cut. MCTR worked with our Human Resources office to increase the pay range and create a specialized job classification for CTRs. This allowed us to offer a competitive salary and enhanced our ability to attract qualified applicants. We were able to hire a qualified CTR within a month after re-advertising the position.

CHALLENGE

After more than 30 years of service, one of the certified tumor registrars (CTRs) at the Montana Central Tumor Registry (MCTR) retired in December 2019. We started the process to fill her position 4 months ahead of her planned retirement date (August 2019) with the hopes of avoiding having a vacant position while also trying to get caught up with the backlog of 2018 cases. The position was advertised locally through the Montana Cancer Registrar Association and several Montana community colleges and universities and nationally through the National Cancer Registrar Association (NCRA) and the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries. However, as of the beginning of December we still hadn't received applications from any qualified applicants. We had communicated with a few CTRs who were currently working for hospitals in Montana and had expressed some interest in the position. Both said they had decided not to apply because the position would require them to take a pay cut. The position was classified as a Data Control Specialist and assigned compensation that was comparable with other, less specialized, positions within Montana State Government. This classification was not appropriate for the CTR position because it didn't acknowledge the special training and certification required for the job.

SOLUTION

Motivated by the feedback from hospital CTRs, the MCTR coordinator started investigating pay for CTRs in Montana and other similar states to determine what compensation might be more competitive. The results of a registrar workforce survey conducted by NCRA in 2017 proved the most useful in establishing a realistic range for competitive pay. The MCTR coordinator then worked with our Human Resources representative to apply for a pay exception for the open CTR position. The application for pay exception included the NCRA survey results and used the

language, “Because this position is specialized as a Certified Tumor Registry and may be difficult to recruit.” The position description was also updated to specify the unique training and certification required. Then the human resources department had to go through an audit procedure. Once the approval was granted, the budget office added MCTR/CTR positions in a separate category so that they won’t be unduly compared to similar sounding positions with less specialized training. MCTR was also able to offer a market adjustment to the existing CTR position so that compensation for both positions would be equitable. In January 2020, we advertised the position again (with the higher pay) through all the same avenues.

RESULTS

MCTR received applications from 3 qualified applicants within just a few weeks of re-advertising. We interviewed 2 of these applicants and were able to make an offer by the end of January. Our new CTR started in February 2020 and has been a great asset to the team.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

As positions become open, MCTR will continue to be proactive in assessing what compensation is appropriate and asking for competitive wages before advertising.

REGISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

406-444-2832; <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cancer/tumorregistry>