

2020 NPCR PENNSYLVANIA CANCER REGISTRY SUCCESS STORY

STORY TOPIC: Telework

STORY CATEGORY: Registry Operations

STORY TITLE: Transitioning to 100% Telework

STORY AUTHOR: Wendy Aldinger, RHIA, CTR

SUMMARY

The Pennsylvania Cancer Registry (PCR) did not telework prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. PCR was notified at midnight the night of March 15, 2020 that we would be teleworking starting on March 16, 2020. Within days the PCR was fully functional with little impact on production.

CHALLENGE

Only one PCR staff member teleworked prior to March 16, 2020. Staff had to quickly set up a working area within their homes and test connectivity. Many staff did not have a dedicated area within their homes to use for working. Not only were they home working, but their family members were also home either working or attending school. All while facing the challenges of a COVID-19 pandemic and being on lock down.

SOLUTION

Luckily the week prior to March 16, 2020 management staff were informed teleworking more than likely was going to happen at a moment's notice. As a result of this, staff began to take home their laptops and necessary materials home on a nightly basis. In addition VPN accounts were set up and tested during that week. March 16, 2020 was a busy day, but staff worked hard. They were able to set up suitable work environments and connect to VPN. PCR supervisors called each staff member to address any concerns and trouble shoot connection issues. Routine daily staff check-in meetings were scheduled and continue today.

Staff completed Teleworking Agreements assuring they would follow all standard work performance procedures. Staff also complete daily production reports that supervisors review and monitor. From March to the end of May, staff only had their laptops to work on. The end of May we were permitted to go into the office to retrieve extra monitors, docking stations, keyboards and anything else that was needed. This had a huge impact on production and staff's ability to set up a fully functioning work area. Management staff maintain an inventory off all equipment that was removed from the office.

The only other need to return to the office since March 16th was when we had 3 staff leave the registry (2 resignations and 1 retirement); management staff met the employees to collect their equipment. During one of those visits, additional staff also went in to review the minimal paper non-hospital cases that were received in 2019 via fax. Late in 2019, we purchased a new fax machine that receives e-faxes that get delivered to resource account. Going forward there is no

need to return to the office due to paper reports. PCR staff continue to work hard and maintain a positive attitude during these trying times.

RESULTS

By March 17, 2020, all staff were fully functional and productive. Production was down 10-20% the first several months. This was mainly due to working off a laptop screen only and VPN connection issues. Our VPN service changed and that resolved many connection issues. Once staff retrieved their extra monitor and other equipment, production skyrocketed. We are now seeing a 10-20% increase in production over when we were working in the office.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Staff are all comfortable working from home, but we all miss the human interaction and getting out of the house. As of now, we will continue to work from home through the remainder of the year and anticipate it will be extended.

Daily check-in calls help keep us connected and informed. Addressing production and moral issues as soon as they surface is key to continued success.

REGISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

1-800-272-1850; <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Reporting-Registries/Cancer-Registry>