

# 2022 NPCR LOUISIANA SUCCESS STORY

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## Cancer Registry and COVID-19 Linkage in Louisiana

### National Program of Cancer Registries SUCCESS STORY

#### SUMMARY

Overall, cancer patients are at an increased risk of developing COVID-19. Both cancer and COVID-19 disproportionately affect populations of color and at special risk of both conditions, throughout the country and especially in the Gulf South region of Louisiana. However, to better understand these disparities, a dataset containing both cancer and COVID-19 data would be required. Thus, the Louisiana Tumor Registry (LTR), the Louisiana Cancer Research Center (LCRC), and the Office of Public Health at the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH-OPH), collaborated beginning in 2020 to link population-based cancer registry data with the statewide COVID-19 registry data and hospital in-patient discharge data (HIDD). The combination of population-based cancer, COVID-19, and hospital discharge data resulted in a robust dataset that paved the way for numerous research studies to determine how COVID-19 affects cancer health disparities in different populations.

#### CHALLENGE

To understand the effect of COVID-19 infection on cancer patients, the challenge we faced was obtaining complete COVID-19 diagnosis information for cancer patients efficiently. Identifying COVID-19 cases among our cancer registry population by reviewing medical records would be time-consuming and absorb numerous resources. Additionally, abstracting COVID-19 data solely from medical records would be incomplete since hospital records would not include all COVID-19 positive cases. COVID-19 testing was done predominately by the state and local governments early in the pandemic and in urgent care settings, which would likely not be part of a patient's medical record.

#### SOLUTION

Since the state documented all positive COVID-19 cases from the start of the pandemic, our solution was to conduct a linkage of cancer registry data and COVID-19 data. This solution required the collaboration of several interested parties for success: the LCRC and the LDH-OPH. With the support of the LCRC grant entitled the Gulf South Minority/ Underserved Clinical Trials Network (Gulf South M/U CTN), the LTR initiated the process in April 2020 to establish a data use agreement with the LDH-OPH to link cancer registry data with the state's population-based registry of all positive COVID-19 cases in Louisiana. Considering our existing collaborations with LDH for linkages with the HIDD and the STD/HIV Program, our goal was to utilize procedures from these previous collaborations for the new project. Following our initial meeting in May 2020, we developed and executed a data use agreement (DUA) to transfer and govern the use of COVID-19 data to the LTR for linkage. Without the support of the LCRC and the willingness of LDH-OPH, the research resulting from this linkage would not have been possible.

#### RESULTS

LTR successfully linked cancer registry data with 2020 COVID-19. Following the cancer and COVID-19 linkage, we then linked those patients with the HIDD file to obtain hospitalization and chronic illness data. The combination of COVID-19, cancer, and hospital discharge data made for an extremely robust dataset that paved the way for several research studies including:

1. Racial Disparity in COVID-19 Severity after Adjusting for Chronic Illnesses and Sociodemographic Factors
2. Racial Disparity in COVID-19 Related Hospital Admission among Breast Cancer Patients
3. Racial Disparities in COVID-19 hospitalization and Deaths among Cancer Patients and the Role of Chronic Diseases and SES Factors
4. Racial/Ethnic and Socioeconomic Disparities in COVID-19 Infection among Working-Age Women with Precancerous Cervical Lesions
5. Factors associated with increased COVID-19 deaths among COVID-19 prostate cancer patients.

#### SUSTAINING SUCCESS

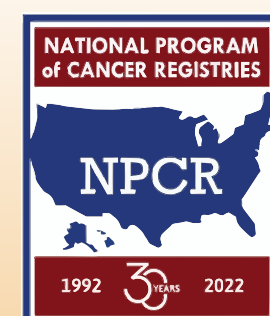
We have conducted the linkage with 2021 COVID-19 data and plan to obtain COVID-19 data from LDH-OPH annually to update the linkage and continue to utilize the data to understand the health disparities facing Louisiana.

#### REGISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

504-568-5757  
[Louisiana Tumor Registry Website](#)

#### REFERENCES

1. Linking population-based cancer registry data with statewide COVID-19 and HIDD files enabled LTR to promptly answer important public health questions. – *Xiao-Cheng Wu, Registry Director*
2. Linking population-based data from different public health programs is an effective way to get complete data to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cancer patients. – *Xiao-Cheng Wu, Registry Director*
3. Our success story demonstrates that collaboration leads to more innovation and efficiency and increases success. – *Xiao-Cheng Wu, Registry Director*
4. Linking COVID-19 data with cancer data is the most efficient way to collect complete COVID-19 data and enhance cancer registry data for research. – *Meichin Hsieh, Registry Assistant Director*



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