

# 2021 NPCR ALASKA SUCCESS STORY

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## Transitioning Physician Electronic File Reporting from Secure Email Attachments to Secure Network Downloads

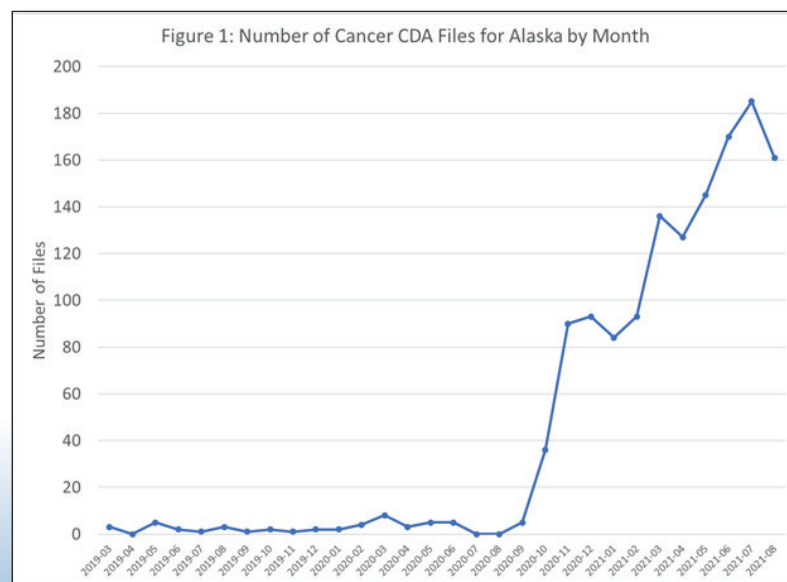
### National Program of Cancer Registries SUCCESS STORY

#### SUMMARY

In March 2019, the Alaska Cancer Registry (ACR) began receiving electronic files via secure email attachments in clinical document architecture (CDA) format from Providence Health System physician offices that use the Epic Electronic Health Record (EHR) software as part of the Meaningful Use initiative. After about 1.5 years of consistently reporting a small number of cases using this method, the caseload from this reporting source unexpectedly increased from about 5 per month to almost 200 per month over a relatively short period of time. As a result, ACR worked with Providence's IT staff to transition to a web-based secure FTP site, and with its Department's IT staff to develop a BizTalk application that downloads the CDA files from the FTP site twice a day to ACR's secure data network.

#### CHALLENGE

Providence Health System started reporting CDA files to ACR in March 2019 for their physician offices using the Epic EHR software. At that time, ACR received 5 or fewer files per month through secure email attachments, one tumor record per file, one file per email. These files were then manually uploaded to the physician module of NPCR's eMaRC Plus software, where they were converted to the NAACCR record layout. Given the small caseload from this reporting source, this seemed like a reasonable method of transmission until the caseload trend dramatically increased after September 2020. By July 2021, we had our highest monthly submission of 185 files (Figure 1). What started as a practical method of transmission quickly became unsustainable, as the large number of monthly emails was taking too much ACR staff time to process.



#### SOLUTION

By April 2021, it was quite evident that the number of transmitted files would continue to increase into the foreseeable future. At that time, ACR's data analyst approached Providence Health System's IT staff, shared the current challenge with the large caseload, and suggested that perhaps a web-based secure FTP site would be a better solution for transmitting so many electronic files monthly. Their IT staff agreed and proceeded to put that solution in place.

#### RESULTS

Within the space of a week, Providence Health System's IT staff had set up a secure FTP site and started routing their CDA files to the site for ACR's data analyst to download. ACR was using the application WinSCP for downloading the files, which was also a manual process. ACR approached its health department's IT staff to automate the download process to reduce ACR staff time further. By the beginning of May 2021, the health department's IT staff had developed a BizTalk application that downloaded the CDA files to ACR's secure data server twice a day.

#### SUSTAINING SUCCESS

This project is an excellent example of how a registry can "work smarter, not harder" in response to changes in registry workload. The collaboration between ACR and the IT staff at Providence and the health department went very smoothly. Both software solutions they developed have worked flawlessly since they were put in place during the first part of 2021. In addition, since our travel was suspended for all state employees in 2020 and 2021, we could utilize underspent funding to automate this internal process.

#### REGISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

907-269-0995

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/VitalStats/Pages/cancer/registry.aspx>



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