

2021 NPCR ALABAMA SUCCESS STORY

Alabama Statewide Cancer Registry: Aretha D. Bracy

Achieving Federal Standards with Major Challenges

National Program of Cancer Registries SUCCESS STORY

SUMMARY

The Alabama Statewide Cancer Registry (ASCR) strives to achieve Gold Standard for Registry Certification and NPCR Registry of Distinction, a distinction received every year since 2004. The ASCR staff collects and provides high quality data through program coordination and external partnerships. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected staff performance, facility reporting, and collaborative partnerships that support programs and organizations seeking to improve cancer outcomes.

CHALLENGE

The ASCR experienced various challenges during COVID-19 pandemic that either prevented or delayed central cancer registry daily operations. While working from home, ASCR staff encountered disruptions due to inadequate or the lack of equipment to perform daily job responsibilities. In addition to primary job responsibilities, various staff were assigned to COVID duties onsite as well as assignments requiring travel to other locations throughout the state. The ASCR faced staff turnover and vacancies coupled with the difficult task of recruiting and retaining CTRs. Position vacancies and a limited pool of CTRs contributed to a significant back log in operational activities and presented obstacles that hindered cancer registry daily operations. Furthermore, reporting facilities experienced similar challenges with staff reassignments and furloughs that tremendously slowed or halted cancer data reporting.

SOLUTION

To address challenges, the ASCR staff participated in 3 NCRA coding and abstracting virtual trainings, and the NCRA virtual conference which offered invaluable information for staff new to cancer registry. The ASCR staff and reporting facilities continue to view the monthly webinars accessible via Fundamental Learning Collaborative for the Cancer Surveillance Community (FLccSC). Although unable to attend face-to-face meetings, the accessibility of personnel training through webcast platforms provided the opportunity to view remotely and avoid disruptions with work schedules. Daily meetings were held where the staff got together to provide updates, brainstorm ideas and everyone pitched in to catch up on projects that had fallen behind. Assisting in staff training, the Education and Training Coordinator played an integral part in engaging the ASCR staff with updates and processes required by NPCR Program Standards. The ASCR staff provided countless hours of training for new or temporary staff at the reporting facilities.

RESULTS

ASCR staff worked tirelessly to perform their job responsibilities and demonstrated a strong team approach by supporting their colleagues in their roles. The staff utilized daily huddles to prioritize critical tasks, eliminate the backlog, and identify areas of improvement to maintain timely, accurate, and complete cancer data reporting. Through WebEx trainings and data submission extensions, reporting facilities were able to return to the data reporting schedule and meet deadlines for data submission. Because of the dedication and determination of the ASCR staff and the efforts of the reporting facilities during a pandemic, both the NPCR Registry of Distinction and the NAACCR Gold Standard Registry Certification was achieved.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

The ASCR will continue to provide educational trainings and webinars for staff and reporting sources. The ASCR aims to fill vacant positions and remains committed to recruiting and retaining CTRs to ensure accurate, timely, complete, and quality data is submitted. The ASCR is committed to maintaining consistent achievement of federal standards.

REGISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

334-206-7035

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/ascr/index.html>



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention