

2023 NPCR COLORADO SUCCESS STORY

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Colorado’s Triumph: Securing Vital Funding for the State Cancer Registry

National Program of Cancer Registries SUCCESS STORY

SUMMARY

The Colorado Central Cancer Registry (CCCR) lacked sufficient resources to perform required core cancer surveillance activities effectively and engaged leadership with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to address the issue. In addition, CCCR applied for the CDC Public Health Infrastructure grant as an additional means to help support its surveillance activities. With additional resources from the state and CDC’s Infrastructure grant, the CCCR added four full-time employees (FTEs) and was able to begin meeting its core cancers surveillance requirements.

CHALLENGE

- The CCCR lacked sufficient resources necessary to perform core cancer surveillance activities effectively as described in Colorado Board of Health Regulations and the US Public Health Services Act.
- Due to rising salaries and finite fiscal resources, the CCCR currently employs fewer FTEs than 10 years ago.
- In 1990, Colorado had a population of just over 3.25 million, with fewer than 450,000 individuals aged 60 or over. In 2020, Colorado had a population of just over 5.75 million with almost 1.25 million individuals aged 60 or over.
- The CCCR reported close to 15,000 new cancers annually in the 1990s. Over the last three years, the CCCR has reported an annual average of just over 29,000 new cancer diagnoses.
- Insufficient resources may have a disproportionate impact on cancer reporting in rural areas, as the CCCR abstracts cancer cases on behalf of hospitals licensed for fewer than 50 beds.

SOLUTION

- Through the normal legislative-executive branch process, CCCR staff engaged with leadership at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to submit a Decision Item request to the Governor’s Office. This request summarized the issues facing the CCCR, the role of cancer surveillance in public health activities, how cancer surveillance helps promote health equity and improves the lives of people in Colorado, and the Department’s proposed solution, including a request for funding for additional FTEs.
- The CCCR also requested that a portion of CDPHE funding from the new five-year CDC Public Health Infrastructure grant be allotted for Cancer Registry purposes.

RESULTS

- After numerous meetings, briefings, and emailed responses to the Governor’s Office and the Office of State Planning and Budgeting, a budget increase for the CCCR was included in the Governor’s proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24 and beyond. The 65% increase ultimately approved by the legislature will provide ongoing funding for nearly two FTEs.
- Funding for CCCR staff was also approved in the CDC Public Health Infrastructure grant, providing funding for two additional FTEs.
- It was vitally important to garner support from division and departmental leadership, as the department elevated the importance of the Cancer Registry request so the program could meet its core surveillance requirements.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

- New state funding, along with funding through the CDC Public Health Infrastructure grant should enable the program to meet its requirements for at least the next five years.
- The CCCR will continue to look for sustainable methods to fund work, identify efficiencies to improve cancer surveillance processes, and employ highly trained, productive team members.

STORY QUOTE

“Cancer is just as life-altering in Alamosa County as it is in Arapahoe County. Rural Coloradoans deserve the same quality of data collection, data access, and analysis as Coloradoans living in our urban areas. Failure to collect these data leads to an under-representation of the cancer burden in our rural areas, resultant services that are misaligned with the true need, and exacerbates inequities across the state. Having the necessary staff will ensure that we are able to completely collect these data in a timelier manner now and into the future.”
– John Arend, Program Manager, CCCR

REGISTRY CONTACT

<https://cdphe.colorado.gov/center-for-health-and-environmental-data/registries-and-vital-statistics/colorado-central-cancer>



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