

Improving Cancer Reporting Compliance Across Maryland

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SUMMARY

Maryland Cancer Registry (MCR) staff asked the Maryland Board of Physicians to draft a letter explaining the consequences of delinquent cancer case reporting. Since there is no formal enforcement mechanism within the statute, the MCR used a rehabilitative and collaborative approach to work with delinquent facilities to get reporting up-to-date and build facility capacity to ensure reporting compliance. The solution was time intensive but allowed for tailored support of the facilities and opportunities to use data modernization initiative (DMI) approaches to support registry infrastructure and capacity. The MCR also introduced new case completeness awards to encourage and reward compliance. These efforts laid the groundwork for working with facilities across the state to improve reporting, expand DMI, celebrate success, and enhance data collection and completeness.

CHALLENGES

- Several facilities in Maryland were delinquent in reporting their cancer cases to the MCR.
- Two facilities with significant case counts were behind in reporting to the MCR.
- No formal enforcement mechanism exists for late or non-reporting in MCR law or regulations.
- Follow-up communication with delinquent facilities was time-consuming and unproductive.
- Compliance issues were complicated by some facilities' lack of responsiveness, buy-in, and capacity.

SOLUTIONS

- The MCR worked with the Maryland Board of Physicians and Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services to draft a letter outlining possible consequences of non-compliance with MCR law. The letter was sent to two delinquent facilities requesting corrective action plans.
- MCR staff reviewed the corrective action plans submitted by the facilities.
- Staff from the MCR and the MCR's quality assurance and data management contractor held biweekly check-ins with the two delinquent facilities to review case reporting and discuss ongoing capacity-related challenges and solutions.
- The MCR encouraged the use of DMI activities for delinquent facilities to enhance registry capacity. For example, one of the two facilities began piloting the use of Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) to streamline and automate some aspects of the reporting process.

- To honor the MCR's late program manager, Kimberly Stern, MCR staff developed the Kimberly Stern Case Completeness Awards. Given out annually, the awards highlight facilities in the state that met three case completeness criteria: at least 90% case completeness (submitted within 9 months), at least 90% reconciliation of disease index review (reconciled and submitted within 90 days), and at least 90% reconciliation of death follow back review (reconciled and submitted within 90 days). The awardees receive copies of their certificates and are highlighted on various channels, including newsletters, email blasts, and at Tumor Registrars Association of Maryland (TRAM) meetings.

RESULTS

- Facilities on remediation plans made progress toward compliance.
- The MCR made incremental progress year-to-year, culminating in more than 90% of case reporting for 12-month data based on a preliminary analysis of data submitted in 2024.
- The MCR used DMI activities to help delinquent facilities improve.
- The MCR awarded eight facilities with the 2023 Kimberly Stern Case Completeness Award. These certificates were given to recipients in 2024.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

- The MCR will maintain regular check-ins with facilities to ensure ongoing compliance.
- The MCR will continue to monitor and track case reporting.
- The MCR will use collaborative processes and DMI approaches for other facilities that struggle with timely reporting.