

Maximizing Partnerships to Facilitate Island-wide Data Sharing

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SUMMARY

Faced with electronic health record (EHR) system challenges and limited resources, the Guam Cancer Registry (GCR) addressed data-sharing challenges. By identifying the root cause—poor communication and low prioritization among partners—Team GCR reengaged partners, fostered collaboration, and provided technical solutions like using the Pacific Web Plus server for data-sharing activities. Thanks to these efforts, GCR now receives regular cancer data from key reporting institutions, ensuring timely and accurate case capture.

CHALLENGES

- Two hospitals and several reporting clinics use different EHR systems, none of which share data with the GCR in a streamlined way.
- Data sharing is sporadic and given a low priority.
- Many cancer data partners do not understand requirements.
- Information technology and network resources (personnel, policies, and funding) are limited throughout Guam's health care system, precluding the ability to create robust data linkages or interoperability.

SOLUTION

GCR used a simple root cause analysis tool from the *Pacific Island Jurisdiction Collaboration Guide* to identify the major contributors to inefficiency: lack of open communication and low prioritization of data sharing among interest holders. Team GCR used the Guam Cancer Trust Fund (GCTF) and other community partners with influence to re-engage the data interest holders. Through individual and group meetings with major data reporting sources, we learned about challenges to data reporting, which helped us design solutions that benefited both entities. In most instances, there is insufficient staff or capacity to run reports against the case-finding list and create secure data exports.

Also, interest holders expressed concern about transmitting case files. They were unaware that some facilities in Guam have used Web Plus software for more than 6 years. The GCR registrars offered to create data exports if provided with read-only access to patient files, thus alleviating our partners' workload and ensuring access to timely patient and treatment data.

RESULTS

Team GCR's effort to rebuild relationships and explain the importance of data sharing to report on program deliverables and comply with Guam law showed excellent returns. For example, due to re-engagement efforts, a local provider who did not submit detailed cancer patient information to GCR in earlier years (2017 to 2022) submitted 158 patient files in 2023 and an additional 291 in 2024 (around 45% of total cases in Guam abstracted in a diagnosis year).

Partnerships were another key factor in success. With the assistance of GCTF, a local non-profit partner, GCR gathered 81 new off-island treatment case files in 2023 and 169 additional case files in 2024, thus increasing its case completeness. Other providers allowed our registrars to access their patient databases, uploaded their data files via Web Plus software, or shared patient listings for linking purposes.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The GCR staff communicates with all data providers and their staff regularly. As staff change, the GCR will provide education activities to ensure that the current level of data sharing is maintained.

As EHR systems become more established on our islands, we will continue using our many partnerships to communicate the importance of data sharing. This will create a more sustainable system that provides authorized access to cancer-related data.