2022 NPCR MICHIGAN SUCCESS STORY

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A New Way to Display Michigan Cancer Data

National Program of Cancer Registries
SUCCESS STORY

SUMMARY

In 2021, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Cancer Program began using Microsoft Power BI as a data visualization tool. The tool has proven to be a great way for partners and the public to access and understand cancer data.

CHALLENGE

In Michigan, each written publication, such as a cancer-specific factsheet, goes through an extensive, time intensive approval process before it can be posted to a website. These fact sheets are static, and the amount of provided data of interest to readers is limited to keeping the fact sheets 1-2 pages long. This results in submission of many, individual data requests to the cancer epidemiologist, which take considerable time to fulfill.

SOLUTION

In 2020, the State of Michigan (SOM) obtained the Microsoft Power BI software. Power BI is a tool that allows users to generate a large variety of visualizations from their data and arrange them into interactive dashboards. The first broad application of Power BI in Michigan was to display COVID-19 case data. All SOM staff can download a free version of Microsoft Power BI desktop application in their software center, and, with a small additional fee ($8 per month), the MDHHS Cancer Program obtained a Pro license to publish new dashboards online. In the past year, the MDHHS Cancer Program has published four site-specific dashboards. These dashboards include data from incidence, mortality, screening, detection, subtype, risk factors and resources all in one place.

RESULTS

The approval process for a website product is much shorter than for a written publication. The approval time has gone from up to 6 months down to as few as two weeks. This has allowed cancer data to be shared with the public at a much faster rate. There has also been a significant decrease in public, media, and partner data requests to the cancer epidemiologist.

Dashboards have been created for female breast, cervical, colorectal and prostate cancers. Being the first to be published, the female breast cancer dashboard has been shared at multiple partner meetings, including the Michigan Cancer Consortium's (MCC) annual meetings and board of director meetings. The feedback is always positive, and members continue to encourage the creation of more dashboards. MCC even switched to use Power BI as the visualization tool for tracking their 2021-2023 priority objectives. This dashboard includes a speedometer-type chart to demonstrate where the data started, where it is today and where it is aiming to get to.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Expansion of available dashboards and their continued maintenance is built into the MDHHS Cancer Program's five-year grant activities and objectives. The expectation is to add eight dashboards to their website in the next five years. They are building internal capacity to post these dashboards without the assistance of the Michigan IT department.

REGISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

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Michigan Cancer Surveillance Program Website