

The Importance of the CTR Credential for Cancer Registry Staff

With growing emphasis on outcomes measurement and data driven decisions in health care, the demand for timely and accurate collection of cancer information has gained more prominence. Not only is this information used by medical professionals for improved health care delivery, but the collection and reporting of cancer data is also mandated by state law and is vital to activities in the war on cancer for many government and national agencies. Now, more than ever before, the cancer information being collected requires high levels of clinical and technical expertise. This means that the professional who collects and maintains this information must be highly skilled and well-trained in the very latest advances in cancer care and also the standards surrounding the reporting of cancer data to state and national organizations.

The best way to assure that your cancer registry professionals have the clinical knowledge and technical expertise to meet the data requirements of your health care system, as well as those of state and national entities, is to support their efforts to become a Certified Tumor Registrar (CTR[®]). It is also important that Certified Tumor Registrars on your staff have your support in maintaining their CTR credential by sponsoring their attendance at state and national meetings that offer continuing education credits.

The Commission on Cancer has recently placed additional emphasis on the importance of the CTR credential. Beginning January 2012, the Commission implemented Program Standard 5.1 which requires that registry staff hired to perform abstracting of cases must pass the CTR exam within three years of their hire date. David Winchester, MD, FACS, Medical Director, Cancer Programs, has the following to say about the role of credentialing:

“A well trained and fully educated certified tumor registrar is absolutely essential to assure accurate data on cancer patients, to track quality care and to work with the Cancer Committee to meet the rigorous standards of the Commission on Cancer. In fact, the Commission now requires registry personnel to be certified. Ask the cancer physician leaders in your institution how important the CTR is and you will get a uniformly strong endorsement. The ultimate beneficiary is the cancer patient.”

National Cancer Registrars Association’s Council on Certification joins with Dr. Winchester in stressing the important role the achievement and maintenance of the CTR credential plays in the quality and integrity of cancer information available to health care practitioners, researchers and public health entities. We hope you will also recognize the advantage of having credentialed professionals on your cancer registry staff and will take steps to provide them with support in pursuing their CTR credential and in maintaining it.



Council on Certification

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