Module * : Cancer Abstractor Qualifications

This module consists of one unit. Unit *.1 is presented as informational content to assist administrators, directors or supervisors with selecting cancer registry personnel who will be responsible for identifying and reporting cancer cases to the Tennessee Cancer Registry.

6.1 Cancer Abstractor Qualifications

Cancer abstractors are the data management experts who collect cancer data from a variety of sources. The primary responsibility of the cancer abstractor is to ensure that timely, accurate, and complete cancer data is collected and maintained on all types of cancer diagnosed and/or treated within a healthcare facility.

To be successful, the cancer abstractor must possess the following:

- **Knowledge of Anatomy and Physiology**
  The cancer abstractor must possess a good working knowledge of anatomy and physiology in order to identify and code the primary site of cancer, determine the extension of disease to other organs, and be able to stage the disease appropriately.

- **Knowledge of Medical Terminology**
  The cancer abstractor must possess a good working knowledge of medical terminology in order to interpret medical reports which contain information on diagnostic procedures, a diagnosis of cancer and treatment information.

- **Good Verbal and Written Skills**
  The cancer abstractor must possess good verbal and written skills. There will be occasions when an abstractor must communicate or interact closely with physicians or other cancer abstractors concerning the specifics of a particular cancer case. These skills will enable comfortable interaction with other healthcare professionals involved with the case.

- **Good Reading Skills**
  The cancer abstractor must possess good reading skills. Proper identification of pertinent reports, data items and supporting text into the abstract will assure complete and accurate information is reported to the state registry.

For more information, visit the web sites:

- **SEER Training**
  training.seer.cancer.gov

- **National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA)**
  www.ncra-usa.org

- **Tennessee Cancer Registry**
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- **ACOS / Commission on Cancer I&R**
  web.facs.org/coc

The following books and publications also provide additional information.

- International Classification of Diseases for Oncology, Third Edition (ICD-O3)
- 2004 Tennessee Cancer Registy Manual
- Collaborative Staging Manual and Coding Instructions
- Facility Oncology Registy Data Standards (FORD)-Used by American
- College of Surgeons, Commission on Cancer, Approved Cancer Programs

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