



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

IL 10-2012-014

In Reply Refer To: 10P4E

December 17, 2012

UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER

CANCER REGISTRY ONCOTRAX UPDATES

1. Purpose. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Information Letter provides information on the expansion of OncoTraX, the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) cancer registry software to include additional data elements for quality measures in the registry abstract.

2. Background

a. VA has a longstanding commitment to improve the quality of care delivered to our Nation's Veterans. VA cares for an estimated 175,000 Veteran cancer patients; therefore, cancer is a focal point for VA and an area of continuous monitoring and improvement. One of VA's oncology goals is to define and maintain the high quality of cancer care. A number of efforts have been made to identify and adopt evidence-based, particularly high-level evidence, and consensus-based quality measures applicable to the Veteran population. Various programs within VA such as the Cancer Care Collaborative and the External Peer Review Programs, as well as external organizations such as the American Society of Clinical Oncology, have developed specific quality measures to assess and improve the quality of care among cancer patients. In order to identify gaps in quality throughout the cancer continuum, there is a great demand for timely and accurate information.

b. Data is essential to measuring cancer care and data systems are the backbone to quality improvement efforts. The VA Central Cancer Registry (VACCR) provides a great deal of information on demographics, staging, treatment, and outcomes. The VACCR has great potential for quality measurement, and registrars' efforts are vital to this endeavor. Updating the registry's OncoTraX software program makes the registry abstracts more robust by including additional data elements necessary to assess and monitor concordance with quality measures. This update to OncoTrax is one of many efforts to improve our cancer data system to allow real-time, extensible monitoring of quality measures to guide cancer care improvement efforts.

c. The Cancer Care Collaborative and other VA expert review panels developed a set of quality measures for lung, colorectal, and prostate cancers, which includes oncology-specific measures for meaningful use of electronic health records. Based on these quality measures, a list of all data elements corresponding to quality measures for lung, colorectal, prostate, and breast cancers was developed and reviewed by the VHA National Cancer Registry Program Coordinator. A majority of the data needed is already being captured in the registry; therefore,

IL 10-2012-014
December 17, 2012

the OncoTraX program has been updated to include the data elements that are not currently a part of the registry abstract.

3. Recommendations

a. It is recommended that all VA medical facility cancer registries collect and report to the VACCR data elements for quality measures for prostate, lung, colorectal, and breast cancers, as outlined by the Cancer Care Collaborative workgroups found at:

- (1) http://vaww.archive.oqp.med.va.gov/oqp_services/qi/QI.htm, and
- (2) [PHASE III Cancer Care Collaborative Document Library](#).

NOTE: These are internal VA Web sites and are not available to the public.

b. To assist the registrars in collecting and reporting these measures, the OncoTraX program has been enhanced. In doing this, VA medical facilities will be leading the way in the collection and dissemination of these quality measures.

4. Inquiries. Inquiries regarding this Information Letter may be directed to Michael J. Kelley, M.D., National Program Director for Oncology, Medical-Surgical Services in the Office of Patient Care Services (10P4E), at 919-286-0411 or Raye Anne Dorn, VHA National Cancer Registry Program Coordinator, at 202-754-8178.

Robert A. Petzel, M.D.
Under Secretary for Health

DISTRIBUTION: E-mailed to the VHA Publications Distribution List 12/19/2012