



Tumor Registrars
Association of
Connecticut

www.trac-ct.org

Our Mission

- **T**o support professional standards and ethics for cancer registry professionals.
- **R**aise the level of knowledge and performance of the cancer registrar through continuous education.
- **A**pprise members of the Association of current activities, research, and trends in oncology.
- **C**ontribute to the betterment of patient care through research and education in cancer registry administration.
- **S**eek active liaison with professional and government organizations which utilize data received from tumor registrars.

SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER

EDITION XIX

PR & COMMUNICATIONS

Stay Connected with our Organization's updates on our Website www.trac-ct.org.

Social Media: Network with us on **Linked In** and follow us on **Facebook!**

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, please email us:
TRAC@trac-ct.org

EDUCATION

Please consider topics and/or faculty for our Annual Educational meeting. We have a committee to help plan and secure speakers.

Contact Kashanna Hector @
kashanna.hector@ct.gov

2022 MEMBERSHIP

Currently we have 36 members.

A member of TRAC receives cost savings on education, opportunities to network with supportive professionals, and a chance for personal and professional development. Join now!

CANCER REGISTRARS
ENHANCE CANCER CARE
ONE DATA POINT AT A TIME

NATIONAL CANCER REGISTRARS WEEK
APRIL 4-8, 2022

President's Message

Rosemary Crawford

These past few years have been extremely difficult for all of us. We sadly lost three of our members, colleagues, and dear friends. TRAC will not be the same without them, but they will always be in our memories. I want to dedicate this year to them.

Spring is finally here, the weather is getting warmer, and your TRAC officers have been busy brainstorming. The executive committee has been hard at work planning a variety of events for our members. Our first event is a virtual social hour. With so many members working remotely-possibly all of us-and no in-person meetings for two years, we felt a social event would be a great way to re-connect with fellow members that we haven't seen in a while. This is a great opportunity to just relax and catch-up with each other. Planning is also underway for a late spring educational event, as well as, additional social opportunities. We are trying to think "out-of-the-box" for different ways to stay in touch with each other throughout the year. Please let us know if you have any ideas! And, hopefully we will be able to have our annual fall meeting in-person!

The NCRA annual meeting is April 7-9 and TRAC is participating in their "hybrid" basket raffle again this year. We have submitted a picture and list of items in our "Brunch in Connecticut" basket featuring products from CT. This is a great opportunity for TRAC to get national exposure and we also get a percentage of the ticket sales! Be sure to check out all the baskets!

We have a lot of ideas for TRAC this year and I am excited to be working with such a great team! I hope to see everyone soon!

Rosemary

TRAC President

In Memoriam



Michele Wojewodzki
June 6, 1960 - January 30, 2022

Treasurer

A donation in her honor has been made to the
Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Vice President's Message

Kashanna Hector-Lebby



Hi everyone,

My name is Kashanna Hector-Lebby, I'm the new Vice President for TRAC and I'm excited and honored to serve on the executive board of our association. I can't wait to get to know you all.

My Bio — I currently work at the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Tumor Registry. I hold the following degrees /credentials MAFM, RHIA, CPC, and CTR. My education includes Master's Degree in Accounting and Financial Management from DeVry University, Bachelor's Degree from the University of Hartford in Accounting and an Associate Degree in HIT from Lincoln College of New England. I'm active on the following boards: NCRA Education Foundation and NAACCR Recruiting and Retention. I'm also a NCRA mentor and business owner of Healthcare Education Leadership Prep, LLC. I reside in Hartford, CT with my family.

As you may know one of my roles as Vice President is to chair the TRAC Education Committee. With that said I'm looking for active members who would like to join the education committee. I also welcome everyone's ideas and feedback as we prepare for the Spring TRAC meeting. I can be reached via email Kashanna.Hector@ct.gov or by phone 860.890.1297



The National Cancer Registrars Association will hold its 48th Annual Educational Conference April 6-9, 2022, at the Gaylord Resort & Convention Center in National Harbor, MD in the DC Metropolitan Area. In addition to the education, the Exhibit Hall is going to be virtual. The online marketplace will provide opportunity to highlight products and services. The State Basket Raffle Program is going virtual too! Nancy Allen has reached out to TRAC and the Executive Committee has agreed to participate.



State Basket

Brooke Chang, BA, CTR
TRAC Past President
Interim Treasurer (Jan-Mar 2022)

I'd like to thank the Nominating Committee and the candidates in completing the process of filling the vacancy of Treasurer. **Tammy Lepisto, Congratulations on your appointment as treasurer.** This was determined by vote of the Executive Board. For any concerns regarding TRAC funds or Membership, please address them with Tammy moving forward.

Thank You to all the members of TRAC who renewed membership this year! The directory should be accessible from the TRAC website with password protection. **TRAC has 36 active members.** One of our members resigned. A handful of members did not renew or resign. Forfeiture of TRAC membership will occur, per the bylaws, July 1st if a member is no longer current with dues and fees.



FROM THE STATE

Patricia laQuinto, CPC



ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE STAFF AT THE CENTRAL TUMOR REGISTRY WE WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (TUMOR REGISTRY) ON THEIR UPCOMING RETIREMENT!

Cathryn Phillips, BA CTR
Registrar of Tumor Records

As many of you already know, I will be retiring from state service as of 1 June 2022, after over twenty years of service. My work at the Connecticut Tumor Registry (CTR) has been extremely rewarding and has provided me with opportunities to collaborate with many people on any number of different projects. As a result, I feel that I have contributed in some small way to the advancement of cancer surveillance and research.

During my tenure at the CTR, the registry has grown significantly in its capacities, overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles, implemented a continuous quality improvement program, and were awarded SEER First Place Data Quality Profile status for the last four years. None of this could have been accomplished without the support of all our CTR staff, as well as the support and collaboration of the Connecticut hospital registrars, i.e.: TRAC members. I am very grateful to all of you for your dedication and cooperation; it is only through everyone's efforts that the CTR has become such a model registry.

If all goes according to plan, I will return to the CTR after a brief hiatus, as a Temporary Worker Retiree. My role will be primarily to assist in the recruitment of a new Registrar of Tumor Records, as well as training, and ongoing operations support. However, the many competent staff at CTR will continue to be available to assist you with various questions and requests, as follows:

- **Reporting, coding, and staging questions: Nahrain Youmara, CTR, Quality Assurance Coordinator, and Christopher Bryan, CTR, Unit Supervisor.**
- **Data Requests, Research Projects, and Data Inquiries: Lou Gonsalves, Ph.D, Epidemiologist**
- **General Questions: Lucy Petruzzello, Secretary**

Thanks to all of you for sharing this journey with me. I wish you all the best!

Cathy

Cathryn E. Phillips, BA, CTR
Registrar of Tumor Records
Public Health Service Manager
Connecticut Tumor Registry

Anna Legere
Administrative Assistant

I want to let you all know how much I've enjoyed my time working in the Connecticut Tumor Registry and the many friendships I've made with hospital registrars, RCA staff and many others. I feel fortunate to have been a part of it for almost 39 years. It's been a pleasure working with each one of you, and I wish you all nothing but the best! Arrivederci for now.

Anna

Jacqueline Brauer, Head Medical Records Technician, is retiring on 1 April 2022 after 39 years of state service. Jackie joined the CTR staff in November of 2009, after working at Cedarcrest Hospital for many years. Jackie's knowledge and expertise has been extremely valuable, as she has served as a mentor to many CTR staff, and a helpful resource to hospital registrars. Her pleasant demeanor and knowledge of coding principles and references have been a great asset, as she provides direction on which references to use, how to apply rules, and the resultant answer to questions. Her skills as an exceptional coder, mentor, and colleague will be sincerely missed. Below are comments from some CTR staff.

"Jackie is an excellent employee and co-worker. She always has a beautiful smile for everyone in the office and enjoys helping her co-workers. She has demonstrated a positive attitude and is always a pleasure to be around. She will truly be missed. Best of luck to you Jackie as you move on to the next chapter in your life. Congratulations!"

"My Mentor Jackie, such a blessing and truly the most knowledgeable of her work that I ever could imagine. We were introduced to each other in June 2018, when I came to the Connecticut Tumor Registry. Jackie was ever so patient and took the time to explain everything she possibly could to me as a newbie. I often say it takes a special gift to work with others, Jackie

went above and beyond to be that gifted individual. I will miss her being my partner at the office. Thanks so much for all your hard work and dedication getting me settled.”

Lloyd Mueller, PhD
Senior Epidemiologist
Connecticut Tumor Registry, Principal Investigator

Lloyd Mueller PhD has served as the Principal Investigator for the CT Tumor Registry’s SEER contract for about the last 13 years, and will retire on June 1st, 2022. He is one of several CTR staff who is retiring this year. This will also mark over 35 years working at DPH. “The work has been challenging and rewarding, and I am grateful for the chance to have met some wonderful hard-working people while here. In retirement I look forward to tackling analytic projects (still), playing music, exercising more and reading, among other things. To my friends in the cancer registry community, and to many I’ve not met - **Thank you** for the important work you continue to do.”

Best,
Lloyd

Nancy M. Santos, CTR
Quality Assurance Coordinator

To my Cancer Registrar Colleagues ...
This is not good-bye, just farewell for now!

I would first like to thank my many mentors who put their faith and trust in me those many years ago. You gave me a career second to none! Thank you to my fellow workers. We have had so much fun over the years; the memories will always bring a smile to my face. We supported each other through good times and especially in tough times when we had to deal with events and losses out of our control. I am truly grateful. I am sure I will continue to run into many of you as I start my new chapter in life, as it were. So, I leave you with a quote from one of the most courageous women who passed away at age 31 after a long battle with cancer. She encouraged us to embrace life and all it has to offer...

“You can’t wait until life isn’t hard anymore...before you decide to be happy”.
Jane Marczewski “Nightbirde” singer

Also, please see the additional contribution from the State Registry published separately to this edition due to length.

From the Editor's Desk

Mary Fleming, CTR, MSOL

The first day of spring in 2022 was March 20th. Spring is considered the season of renewal. We leave the coldness and gray of winter and enter the warmth and color of spring. We wait for the 1st daffodils of the season to bloom. Give the house a thorough cleaning. Put our winter clothes away and bring out the shorts and tees. Can we use this principle of rejuvenation in our jobs?

With the stress of the last couple of years, it might be worthwhile to step back and look at our purpose. What would that look like? Why keep going? I'll be honest with you. Some days I sit back from my desk and think, "this is soooo not worth it!" Why do we do the work that we do? It's definitely interesting. Non-stop learning, challenging, but can also be monotonous, thankless, and frustrating. I've been at this work a very long time. Honestly, I don't think I can do anything else but that's not enough of a reason to keep on going. So, what is it that keeps me in this career spring after spring?

What keeps me going is remembering that this is not a job. It's a career, a profession. If I just want to be able to pay the bills, I could do anything else. I hate being bored. This is not boring. Medical science changes constantly making continuous learning a necessity. As does the computer science, the regulations, the expectations of the job and so on. This is not a static profession. What else? It's important. I know that hardly anyone outside of this world knows that, but it's still true. The data that we collect, and share is critical to the advancement of cancer treatment. It's important to the hospitals for which we collect that data to know what works, what doesn't, what is needed and what isn't.

The patients. The most important reason to keep going. I don't consider the data we collect to represent cases. They're people. They're my patients and deserve the best care that I can provide to them. This is the key to my professional renewal. Even though they'll never know who I am or what I do, this is the main reason why I choose to continue to work in this profession. This is at the core of my renewal. It's the best way that I can contribute to their care.

