



Tumor Registrars
Association of
Connecticut

www.trac-ct.org

Our Mission

- To support professional standards and ethics for cancer registry professionals.
- Raise the level of knowledge and performance of the cancer registrar through continuous education.
- Apprise members of the Association of current activities, research, and trends in oncology.
- Contribute to the betterment of patient care through research and education in cancer registry administration.
- Seek active liaison with professional and government organizations which utilize data received from tumor registrars.

SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

EDITION XVII

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 Sara Mercado directly or email TRAC@trac-ct.org to host a meeting.

2021 MEMBERSHIP

Currently we have 38 members: 35 Active, 3 inactive.

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!



MILESTONE Moment: **Michele Wojewodzki** reached 30 years in the Tumor Registry Profession! Congratulations on this achievement and thank you for your time serving the TRAC organization.

Congratulations are also extended to **Kathryn Linda** for achieving her Certified Tumor Registrars credential.



Mary Drago, we wish you wellness and strength in your recovery from illness. We are happy you have returned home. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

President's Message

Brooke Chang, BA, CTR

Sing it with me! "I am a Survivor, I'm not gon' give up, I'm not gon' stop, I'm gon' work harder. I'm the survivor, I'm gonna make it, I will survive, keep on survivin' " – Destiny's Child, 2002.

Of late, I'm feeling a bit like a washed-up mermaid. I'm exhausted from the past year. We have borne witness to the burdens of stress



living through a pandemic, complicated by natural disaster, social unrest with racial injustice and acts of violence, as well as challenged by loss of so much we hold dear including ourselves at times. And yet, work of all things, has been my constant and welcome **DISTRACTION**. How ironic is that?

The one thing I can count on to be true, my work is meaningful and needed in the fight against cancer. In speaking with colleagues and friends, I've realized a virus has been able to impact ALL our lives in essentially every way. How we live and die, how we communicate, where or when we work and learn, along with how we safeguard ourselves and others. And we have adapted as best possible to continue on.

Our **ADAPTATION** is the key to our professional success as well. Are you ready for more change? You had better be. Standard setters are marching on with changes in directions for capturing data and coding while making adaptations to how we access those changes. For cancers diagnosed in the USA this year, we have a new version of ICD-O-3, updated solid tumor rules, and even the AJCC is releasing chapter updates **VIRTUALLY**.

I hope you all can finish out 2020 strong and proud. And after all that hard work, remember to take a short breather. It will be important for your well-being and sanity. Another truth, nothing lasts forever, even the tough times.

With hope and resilience, your friend and colleague, Brooke.

In Memoriam

Teresita Vega, BA CTR
Sr Manager of the Tumor Registry at Smilow Cancer Hospital
for Yale New Haven Health System

TRAC lost a dear friend and colleague Nov 24, 2020 after a brief but heroic battle with COVID 19.

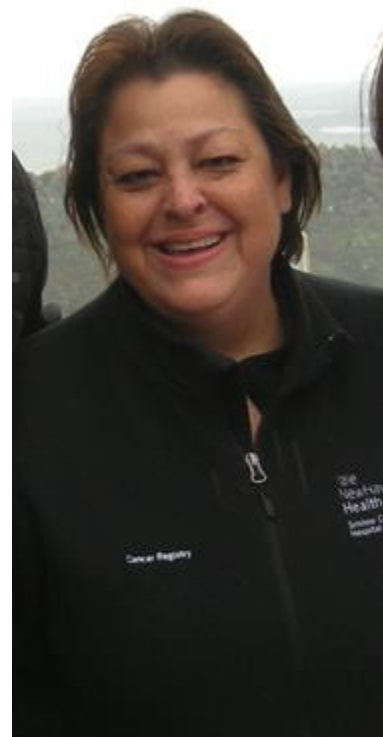
Terri was an educator, volunteer, mentor, and friend. Her expertise brought leadership and insight to both the Tumor Registrars Association of Connecticut and the National Cancer Registrars Association.

Terri was well accomplished in her career. She assisted in several research publications at Yale, was invited to lecture across the globe, and served our organization in several capacities including past president.

Beyond that Terri was a woman dedicated to her family, the main source of her joy and pride. She is dearly missed and fondly remembered.

Here is a link to her obituary:

[Teresita Del Nino Jesus Vega Obituary \(1958 - 2020\) - Bethany, CT - New Haven Register \(legacy.com\)](#)



I ask the members of our organization to name the Scholarship TRAC offers each year for education in honor of Terri. Additionally, I ask the Educational committee and membership to consider the funds for this scholarship be allocated to any recipient for educational opportunity up to the amount of \$500, subject to reimbursement.

Respectfully,
Brooke Chang, BA, CTR
2018-2021 TRAC President

In November of 2020, TRAC received a check from NCRA for the Basket Program for \$284.06 that covered all costs.



Large Connecticut Basket

From the Old Wethersfield Country Store

Connecticut made! Everything in this basket is made in Connecticut. All non perishable, perfect for out of towners, representing your hometown state or as a welcome basket. Packaged securely with clear wrap and a bow, basket includes



- tortilla chips
- 1/2 pound maple syrup
- jam
- 1/2 pound of honey
- large Connecticut candle
- cookies
- tapenade
- coffee

Equal value substitutions in baskets may occur and items are subject to availability.

<https://www.owcsct.com/gift-baskets-1/large-connecticut-basket>

Vice President's Message

Sara Mercado, RHIT, CTR

Greetings TRAC members!

It has been a whirlwind era for many of us Cancer Registrars since the start of 2020 – but here we are already halfway through 2021, with summer just around the corner. Can you believe it? There have been big changes in 2021 cancer data collection, and that means big opportunities for registry education.

NCRA's annual educational conference is fully virtual this year and includes myriad lectures for registry professionals of varying different backgrounds. It's the perfect opportunity to skip the travelling and get right into the learning! There is still time to register. Registration ends May 14, 2021.

The next TRAC meeting is still being planned, and a 'Save the Date' will be delivered when a date & location (including virtual) is selected. The state of in-person meetings is still tenuous at this point, but the goal is for TRAC to return to in-person meetings when safe to do so. If you are interested in hosting, please email us! We rely heavily on your feedback to select interesting educational topics, so once again please email us with suggestions at trac@trac-ct.org.



The NCRA 47th Annual meeting is scheduled virtually June 3-5 2021. Registration cut off is May 14th. Click here for further information. <https://www.ncra-usa.org/Conference/2021-Virtual-Conference/2021-Virtual-Conference-Information>



FROM THE STATE

Cathy Phillips, CTR

Case Ascertainment Procedures

The Connecticut Tumor Registry (CTR) has processes in place to ensure the completeness of annual accessions. These consist of casefinding audits; accession linkages; and follow-back on Abstract Facility Leads (AFLs). This is a brief outline of the processes, and the rationale for each.

Casefinding Audits: These audits are performed to ensure that no reportable tissue diagnoses are overlooked. The audit process requires CTR staff to review each pathology report produced by the reporting hospital, identify the reportable cases, and to confirm that the CTR has a matching abstract for each reportable case. The audits are typically performed remotely; the CTR auditor is either provided remote access to the hospital's laboratory information management system or is given the year's pathology reports on some type of media, either a CD, flash drive, or scanned reports. Any probable missed cases are listed and provided to the hospital registry to reconcile.

Accession Linkages: These linkages are performed to ensure that all cases accessioned by the hospital have transmitted successfully to the CTR. Hospital registrars provide the CTR with an Excel file containing identifying information on all cases accessioned for a given diagnosis year, based on year of diagnosis. This file is linked with an extract from the CTR database of cases reported by the hospital. Any cases on the hospital accession list not found on the CTR database are identified, and this list is provided to the hospital for reconciliation.

Abstract Facility Leads (AFLs): This process ensures that all reportable pathology cases have been linked to a matching NAACCR abstract. AFLs are created by the CTR's database management system (SEER*DMS) for each reportable pathology report received from the hospital.

The status of the AFL remains open until a matching NAACCR abstract is received from the hospital and linked to the pathology report. Once the linkage is completed, the AFL status is set to closed. As each hospital's matching and linkage task are completed (consolidated), CTR staff manually review the remaining open AFLs to determine whether the status is appropriate. After review is completed, a list is generated and sent to the hospital for reconciliation.

These three processes not only assist the CTR in confirming the completeness of case ascertainment, they also can be used as a quality assurance/quality improvement tool for the hospital registries. Is there a pattern to "missed" cases, and if so, how can it be corrected? Is there a software issue that needs to be reported to the vendor? Are there problems with the AIM casefinding algorithms? We hope these processes will not only assist the CTR in our mission, but also provide some insight into internal issues that may impact your work. We're all in this together!

From the Editor’s Desk

Mary Fleming, CTR, MSOL

Hello from your new Editor! I’m happy to be able to contribute to our organization. You’ve noticed a few format changes but the messages from the staff remain. We want the TRAC newsletter to be a useful communication tool so consider contributing to the newsletter. Do you have a story to share? An accomplishment? Abstracting tips? A new resource? Let me know.

I’ve been thinking about awareness ribbons lately. Pink breast cancer awareness ribbons are on everything. Each month has a disease associated with it, sometimes more than one. Have you wondered where this idea originated? Although using a color to communicate a message goes back to Medieval times when a Knight would wear a Lady’s scarf into battle, our more current use goes back to the ‘70’s.

How many of you remember the song, “Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree”? It seemed as if that song was on the radio all the time. A yellow ribbon tied to a tree became an awareness ribbon for a hostage. In the 1970’s, it was for the hostages taken in Iran. It is still used for our veterans taken in war or remembrance of those who are currently serving and away from their families.

Ribbons are used to recognize success. 1st Place prize is a blue ribbon. 2nd and 3rd prize signified by other colors. In our profession, we see ribbons used to promote awareness of site-specific cancers and for the support of those who are afflicted with them. Ribbons are considered public domain and are not trade-marked unless stylized for a particular company’s product or message. They can be any color, shade, combination, and some colors have multiple users. For example, a red ribbon is used for heart health but also for HIV/AIDS awareness.

No one organization can claim a particular month for their awareness message. You’ll see some months are congested with several different causes and messages. May, for example, is an awareness month for bladder, brain, and melanoma. It is also the month for Lyme disease, mental health, and motorcycle safety awareness. In any given month, you can have an interesting mix of topics. Here’s what is coming up in the next few months for cancer awareness.

| <u>Month</u> | <u>Topic</u> | <u>Ribbon</u> |
|--------------|------------------------|------------------|
| May | Brain Cancer | Grey |
| | Melanoma & Skin Cancer | Black |
| | Bladder | Purple/Blue/Gold |
| June | Cancer Survivors Month | Lavender |
| July | Sarcoma | Yellow |
| | Bone | Yellow |

Here's a question for you. How would you design a CTR ribbon? Some colors are associated with certain emotions and characteristics. Black, in the fashion world, is considered elegant and classic. Whereas red, is a power color. Exciting and dramatic. Blue has many meanings. It's for trust, professionalism, loyalty, and knowledge to name a few. Yellow for joy, liveliness, intellect, and energy. There's a whole psychology behind the use of color. If I were to design a CTR ribbon, it would look like this.



Green for health, dark blue for knowledge, and yellow for intellect. The green, of course, represents the health and well-being of our patients. The dark blue for the knowledge that we hold and strive to use to the best of our abilities. Yellow for the intellect that we hone by studying and applying the principles of our profession.

What would your ribbon look like?

Addendum:

The State Registry contributed a great deal of information for this edition of the newsletter. It has been formatted as an Attachment that will be distributed along with this newsletter.