



## Summary of AJCC 2011 Annual Meeting

The AJCC Annual Meeting was held in Chicago on September 22- 24, 2011. Participants received a series of updates summarizing the AJCC's achievements for the past year. Plans for future priorities and activities were also discussed in the meetings.

The AJCC is pleased to welcome the following individuals who were appointed to membership during the 2011 Annual Meeting.

- **American Cancer Society:** Robert K. Brookland, MD, GBMC Healthcare, Inc., Baltimore, MD
- **North American Association of Central Cancer Registries:** Maria J. Schymura, PhD, New York State Cancer Registry, Menands, NY
- **Society of Urologic Oncology:** Fernando J. Bianco, MD, Columbia University, Mt. Sinai Medical Center, Miami Beach, FL

Dr. Carolyn Compton and Dr. David Byrd were reappointed as AJCC Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

An Emeritus membership category was adopted. Frederick Greene, MD, FACS was awarded the emeritus designation during a special recognition of his longstanding service to the AJCC. Dr. Greene is past Chair, Editor of the 6<sup>th</sup> edition *Cancer Staging Manual* and 1<sup>st</sup> edition *Cancer Staging Atlas* and has provided countless volunteer hours of participation on various AJCC committees and initiatives.

A special tribute was held in memory of Irvin Fleming, MD, FACS. Dr. Fleming was a former Chair of the AJCC and longtime volunteer of the AJCC, the CoC, and the American Cancer Society. He passed in August 2011.

### Education and Promotions Committee

Dr. David J. Winchester demonstrated a web-based learning module from QuantiaMD. Quantia MD provides short online learning segments that can be delivered to mobile devices like an iPhone, iPad, as well as Android devices. The learning modules are short and provide a quick and easy way for a physician to consume education and earn CME. Each module is approximately five minutes and provides the ability for physicians to collaborate at the completion of the learning module on the event page. Physicians are adopting mobile devices and tablets and QuantiaMD modules are optimized for that delivery. It is felt that delivery mechanism will better reach the physician community with TNM staging education. The AJCC will explore a strategic partnership with Quantia MD to expand the audience of AJCC educational products.

Sales of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition *Cancer Staging Manual* and *Handbook* continue to surpass the 6<sup>th</sup> edition sales figures from the same period in its life cycle. Production of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition *Cancer Staging Atlas* is underway with a projected publication date of Spring 2012.

Other ongoing education activities include:

- **Staging Moments** - The popular Staging Moments presentations have been revised with 7<sup>th</sup> edition content and continue to be popular. These short, case-based scenarios in PowerPoint format are available for free download on the AJCC website. Future plans are to promote these presentations to medical school educational program directors for incorporation into residency programs, and to the American College of Surgeons Young Fellows Association and Resident Program email lists.
- **YouTube** - The AJCC has created a YouTube channel! Initial video postings are narrated versions of the Staging Moments presentations. There has been hundreds of views to date. Staff is also exploring opportunities to embed similar videos on the website in the future.
- **Cancer Staging Posters** - The popular 7<sup>th</sup> edition cancer staging posters have been available for free download on the AJCC website for about a year. The posters are available in three different sizes (8.5 x 11 inches, 8 x 12 inches, and 18 x 24 inches) to download and print. A limited quantity of large printed poster packets is also available for ordering through the College's online publication catalog. The packet of posters includes all 7 disease sites, breast, lung, colon, pancreas, prostate, melanoma and ovary.
- **Webinar Series** – The staging webinar series was very successful during the months following the release of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition. As the 7<sup>th</sup> edition has become fully adopted, use of the 60 minute webinars has been limited. The AJCC is pleased to announce that the breast webinar has been translated into Spanish is available on the AJCC/CoC Education Portal page at <http://eo2.commpartners.com/users/acs/session.php?id=3737>. Promotion of the Spanish breast webinar will continue.

### **Informatics Committee**

The AJCC will undertake a website redesign in the coming months. The Informatics and Education and Promotions Committees will work with staff to develop a request for proposals and to evaluate responses and final selection of appropriate vendors.

A presentation by George A. Komatsoulis, PhD, Deputy Director of the NCI Center for Bioinformatics and Information Technology (NCI CBIIT) and acting Chief Information Officer of the NCI, outlined the NCI's efforts to map common data elements, including AJCC staging system elements, across various platforms. The NCI's repository of terms contains information data elements and metadata with unique descriptors exceeding 60,000 data elements. These data elements are clearly defined and available to the public. A pilot project with CBIIT will include evaluation of the data elements contained in the cancer staging schema and Collaborative Stage schema for melanoma and colon. The results of the study will be used to harmonize common data elements across disease sites.

The vision for development of an AJCC application programmer interface (API) to maintain the integrity of the TNM definitions and stage groups was outlined during the Informatics Committee meeting. A domain specific tool in a Windows environment will be created to allow AJCC staff and experts to curate anatomic categories and stage definitions electronically in real time. The API will eliminate the introduction of errors or discrepancies between AJCC intent and programmer

interpretation in EHR, clinical trial and other oncology applications. A prototype is expected to be available by early 2012.

### **Collaborative Stage Data Collection System**

The AJCC continues to serve as the administrative sponsor of the Collaborative Stage Data Collection System (CS) for cancer patient data collection. Two recent changes to the program have been implemented to assure sustainability of CS. First, David Raglin was hired as the CS Program Administrator. In this new staff position, David will manage the day-to-day activities of CS. Additionally, the CS Governance Committee was formalized as a standing committee of the AJCC. The CS Governance Committee (formerly named the Project Management Team) will have continued oversight of the CS program under the aegis of the Executive Committee. The CS Governance Committee will work over the coming months to formalize the structure of CS through defined membership roles, and development of policies and procedures to improve the quality and consistency of CS processes. Other CS related activities include:

- A minor software version release, v.02.04 is scheduled for early December 2011. The release incorporates approximately 100 changes to the schemas. A successful beta release to registry management software vendors preceded the production release.
- A reliability study was recently completed with participation by nearly 1000 cancer registrars. The purpose of the web-based survey was to assess cancer registrar knowledge of CS coding structures and the ability to extract information on CS data elements from the medical record. The results of the reliability study will be used identify opportunities for educational initiatives and clarifications in the coding instructions.
- A CS business process analysis was undertaken in early 2011. This process inventoried all business processes related to CS across five work teams. Three recommendations emerged from the analysis:
  - a. Adopt a knowledge management (KM) strategy to more fully integrate AJCC and CS content. The KM will provide flow through of intellectual content from AJCC expert panels to the CS Mapping Team responsible for schema development.
  - b. Transition to a content management system for maintenance of the CS website.
  - c. Develop a learning management system for delivery of CS education.

The CS Governance Committee is responsible for implementation of these recommendations and work continues on each of these initiatives.

### **Future Plans**

The AJCC is looking ahead to the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the cancer staging system. Work is underway to develop standardized and efficient processes for the development of future editions of AJCC staging systems via a three-fold approach, as follows:

- define criteria or rules for acceptance and integration of externally validated non-anatomic prognostic factors with anatomic staging.
- define strategies to achieve uniformity of approach and final deliverable across all disease sites.
- establish internal processes and guidelines for editorial board and expert panel selection, orientation, and definition of roles and responsibilities.

To assure that future staging systems meet the needs of all the users of TNM data, the AJCC hosted a Surveillance Summit in April 2011, *Cancer Staging: From Clinical Practice to Population Surveillance*. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together the clinical and surveillance communities to understand the evolution of staging data and how each community uses the data. Attendees were from both the public and private sector. Presentations addressed how the staging system is created, how clinicians use stage data to choose patient treatment, how registrars collect the data, and finally how researchers and the surveillance community use the data.

The recommendations from the two day meeting included a recommendation to the AJCC to stabilize anatomic stage. In response, at the Annual Meeting the AJCC Executive Committee approved the following statement:

*Future changes to the AJCC tumor, node, or metastasis categories will not be incorporated into the AJCC staging system unless evidence exists to substantiate that such a change will have a clinically meaningful effect on patient care and/or outcomes.*

The two work groups formed as a result of the Surveillance Summit continue to identify strategies to simplify the CS system and to develop criteria for inclusion of new data elements in the future.

To build on the framework for the 8<sup>th</sup> edition, the AJCC is embarking on a collaborative project with the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) to develop an oncology lexicon. The purpose of the initiative is to gain consensus on staging concepts and nomenclature in preparation for future staging systems. Areas to be addressed include general terminology applicable across sites, terminology that separates extent of disease versus prognostication, and terms and concepts related to emerging technologies. Additional harmonization with large vocabulary sets will also be addressed. The final product will be a vocabulary set that will be used by the UICC and AJCC during development of the next cancer staging system.

At the close of the 2011 Annual Meeting, the following outgoing members were recognized for their distinguished service to the AJCC:

- Mahul B. Amin, MD, FCAP (College of American Pathologists)
- Ermilo Barrera, Jr., MD, FACS (American Cancer Society)
- Al B. Benson III, MD (American College of Physicians)
- Sam S. Chang, MD (Society of Urologic Oncologists)
- David B. Duggan, MD, MACP (American College of Physicians)
- Sheila A. Prindiville, MD, MPH (National Cancer Institute)
- Susan Sabatino, MD, MPH (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Colleen Sherman, RHIA, CTR (North American Association of Central Cancer Registries)
- Alan G. Thorson, MD, FACS (American Cancer Society)
- Mary Kay Washington, MD, PhD (College of American Pathologists)