

Hospital Followback Process

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One of the fundamental activities CRGC performs is the review of pathology reports. With the passage of AB2325, we now receive pathology reports, in electronic format, from all hospitals and independent laboratories in California. This law went into effect on January 1, 2019 and since we have just begun to process 2019 cases, we are now processing a significantly higher number of pathology reports from new sources. Among those sources are the hospital labs. This means you will probably begin to receive more inquiries on potentially missed cases that we have identified in our pathology review.

A few years ago, the California Cancer Registry (CCR) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) developed a portal to be used for hospital followback. Due to our size and amount of cases, CRGC adopted the use of the portal. The portal itself does have known issues and we work to resolve those issues as quickly as we can. It is helpful to outline how cases get into the portal for the hospital to review.

When processing electronic pathology reports, staff in the Data Collection Unit (DCU) read the text of the report and determine the following:

- 1) Reportability
- 2) Primary site, including subsite
- 3) Laterality
- 4) Histology
- 5) Behavior

Once these are determined and coded the staff member chooses the followback source, choosing either the physician or hospital (reporting facility). It is important to note that under most circumstances, if a hospital is identified in the report, the hospital is chosen for the followback source. It is also important to note, the followback source is where the case will be sent for followback, to get more information, if we do not identify a case in the state database. In addition, if the hospital is selected for the followback source then there must be an admission received from that hospital for that patient and tumor; if not the case will be sent back to the hospital via the portal. It is at this point where the hospital receives the case and must review it. This is where you come in!

The system was designed to notify the hospitals at the beginning of the month electronically (email) that there are cases waiting for them to review. There have been some notification issues that we try to resolve when

discovered. We recommend you check your portal routinely (monthly) regardless whether you receive an email or not.

Each case in the portal must be reviewed and a response selected via a drop down. Currently, the response choices are:

- We plan to send admission soon through our proprietary software
- Another facilities case. See comments
- We don't have complete information at this point to send the admission
- Not a cancer case
- We have no information about this patient or tumor
- Canceling due to other reasons. See comment.

While only two of the choices refers to a comment, we ask that if you select any response other than the first, you enter a comment.

I know that there have been frustrations expressed by some hospitals that upon review, some of the cases sent back to the hospital had already been reported or suddenly there are hundreds of cases in your queue that need to be reviewed. Some of this is the result of software issues that are out of our control. My staff and I work to reduce these types of issues. There also have been some circumstances where there are case(s) that were sent out that are not reportable. While training staff routinely occurs, we have also moved the coding of hospital pathology reports to the CTR staff to address these types of errors and further reduce your workload associated with these cases.

It is essential that your facility reviews the cases CRGC sends via the Hospital Followback Portal and selects a response, noted above. If you don't review each case, they will not leave your portal and they will be there every month waiting for your review and comment.

There are changes coming to the portal and we will outline those in another article once those changes go live.

If you do not have access to your portal or need help with the portal please contact me at kziegler@crgc-cancer.org.