

QA Matters: Timeliness of Cancer Reporting

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Timely cancer reporting is a key component of data quality and an important measure included in the Quality Indicator Reports (QIRs). **Under Vermont Cancer Registry law, cases must be reported to the Vermont Cancer Registry (VCR) within 180 days of the Date of First Contact.** The VCR standard requires that at least 90% of cases meet this benchmark, allowing for a 10% margin.

This QA Matters brief reviews how timeliness is measured, why it matters, and strategies that may help support timely reporting.

Key Points

- **Vermont law requires reporting within 180 days of the Date of First Contact.**
- **VCR's standard is that at least 90% of cases are reported within 180 days.**
- **Timeliness is measured using Date of First Contact and Date Case Exported.**
- **Cases do not need to be held until all treatment information is available.**
- **Timely reporting supports statewide surveillance, quality assurance, and national reporting.**
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If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact Linda.Bloschies@vermont.gov.

Why This Matters

- Timeliness is a key component of cancer registry data quality.
- Timely reporting supports statewide cancer surveillance, program planning, and reporting activities.
- Timely submission allows VCR to complete required quality assurance and processing activities in preparation for annual data submissions.
- Delayed reporting can affect data quality monitoring, statewide surveillance activities, and reporting requirements.



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Understanding Timeliness

For reporting purposes, timeliness is calculated based on the interval between the Date of First Contact and the Date Case Exported.

We recognize that hospital registrars balance many competing responsibilities, and timely reporting can sometimes take a back seat to more immediate demands. While maintaining both accuracy and timeliness can feel challenging, there are several approaches that may help support efficient workflow management.

Many patients receive care at multiple facilities. VCR frequently receives abstracts from more than one reporting source and consolidates this information within the registry database.

You do not need to wait until all treatment information is available before submitting cases. Documenting referral facilities within treatment text fields is sufficient. While timely submission is important, facilities should continue to complete cases as thoroughly as possible within the 180-day reporting window to ensure both accuracy and completeness.

Recommendations for Registrars

- Keep a list of cases in your abstract queue organized by Date of First Contact to help prioritize work and transmissions.
- Organize your workflow by site/schema when possible. This can reduce time spent switching between reference materials and may improve accuracy.
- Monitor your casefinding systems regularly. If reports are incomplete or delayed, follow up with your contacts.
- Maintain strong relationships with other facilities to ensure timely sharing of needed information.
- If your facility is working through a backlog, prioritize missing or unreported cases to help prevent further delays and minimize the impact on timeliness measures.
- Contact VCR if you need guidance on prioritizing work while addressing a backlog.

Questions?

If you have questions regarding this topic, need assistance interpreting coding guidance, or have other cancer registry-related questions, please contact the Vermont Cancer Registry at AHS.VDHHSICancerRegistry@vermont.gov.