

North American Association of Central Cancer Registries

**GUIDELINES FOR
IMPLEMENTATION OF SEER
SUMMARY STAGE 2000**

Prepared by the

**NAACCR SEER Summary Stage 2000
Implementation Work Group**

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1 INTRODUCTION

These consensus guidelines, developed by the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries (NAACCR) SEER Summary Stage 2000 (SSS2000) Work Group and approved by the NAACCR Board of Directors, address implementation of SSS2000 for cases diagnosed on or after January 1, 2001. The guidelines are patterned after those of the ICD-O-3 Work Group, which were released on November 27, 2000 and address another coding change that is also effective for cancers diagnosed on or after January 1, 2001. Members of the SSS2000 work group are listed below and they include standard setting organizations, central registries, and cancer registry software vendors.

Implementation of new standards is never 100 percent problem-free. The concept of SSS2000 was first presented to the Uniform Data Standards Committee in November 1999. The need for a revised manual to provide more specific staging instructions, for all primary sites, was recognized. At that time, the new manual was projected to be available in the fall of 2000.

The SSS2000 changes affect hospital registrars in the United States, most U.S. central registries, the National Program of Cancer Registries, and software vendors. Although the staging scheme is called "SEER Summary Stage," the NCI SEER program does not require its submission; NCI-SEER derives Summary Stage from Extent of Disease (EOD) codes by means of a computer algorithm. Canadian registries do not collect or derive SEER Summary Stage.

SSS2000 WORK GROUP MEMBERS

Toshi Abe, MSW, CTR
New Jersey State Cancer Registry

Sally Bushhouse, DVM, PhD
Minnesota Cancer Surveillance System

April Fritz, RHIT, CTR
National Cancer Institute
Surveillance Epidemiology & End Results
Program

Ken Gerlach, MPH, CTR
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Program of Cancer Registries

Dianne Hultstrom, RHIT, CTR
Medical Registry Services, Inc.

Annette Hurlbut, RHIT, CTR
IMPAC Medical Systems, Inc.

Betsy A. Kohler, MPH, CTR
New Jersey State Cancer Registry

Robin Otto, RHIA, CTR
Pennsylvania Cancer Registry

Lynn Ries, MS
National Cancer Institute
Surveillance Epidemiology & End Results
Program

Steven Roffers, PA, CTR
Emory University

Jan Snodgrass, CTR
Illinois State Cancer Registry

Patricia Tary, CTR
American College of Surgeons

Thomas Tucker, MPH
Kentucky Cancer Registry

John L. Young, Jr., DrPH, CTR
Atlanta SEER Program
Emory University

2 BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

2.1 Why SEER SUMMARY STAGE 2000?

Development of SSS2000, an international coding scheme, has been underway for several years. The new manual (called the SEER Summary Staging Manual 2000 – SSS Manual 2000) replaces the Summary Staging Guide (1977). Unlike the previous document, the SSS2000 document is intended as a coding manual rather than a staging guide. It has more detailed instructions, complete with drawings, for staging. It has coding instructions for each anatomic site in the International Classification of Diseases for Oncology, 3rd Edition (ICD-O-3). Also, certain undocumented rules commonly applied to summary staging have now been documented and some existing rules have been clarified. It is hoped that the new,

3 STATEMENTS FROM STANDARD-SETTING ORGANIZATIONS ABOUT SSS2000 IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 The American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC) Approved Cancer Programs

CoC-approved cancer programs will be required to use SSS2000 codes for cases diagnosed on or after

a table format when possible. Consensus recommendations are then reported in a table format or narrative form.

4.1 Reporting facilities (includes CoC approved cancer programs)

Table 1: Hospital Level Implementation Needs and Availability

Implementation Need	Availability
SSS Manual 2000 (draft PDF version)	December 31, 2000
NAACCR Version 9 EDITS metafiles	January 1, 2001
SSS Manual 2000 (final PDF version)	January 2001
SSS Manual 2000 (hard copy)	April 2001
Software upgrade delivered for ICD-O-3 & SSS2000	July 2001
State-specific Version 9 Edits metafiles	Varies by state.

Table 2: Implementation for Reporting Facilities (Includes CoC Approved Hospitals)

Recommended Implementation:

Download SSS Manual 2000 from SEER web site and use it for coding cases diagnosed on or after January 1, 2001. Obtain printed manual when it becomes available. Enter the SSS2000 code in the old, Summary Stage, field. Use the associated text field to indicate the staging scheme used.

Issues:

No software reminders/checks will be available to ensure that the correct summary staging manual is used. Data from the SSS1977 field will be moved to the SSS2000 field for 2001 diagnoses based solely on

will continue to report cases to their state registries using their existing software. The record conversion programs scheduled for release in March 2001 will handle SSS2000 information appropriately during this period of transition, so that reporting from facilities to central registries should continue without interruption, even when vendors and central registries are using different record versions.

All cancer data collection systems must be able to import or export a NAACCR Version 9 record in order to properly handle SSS2000. The Uniform Data Standards Committee approved a new data item in the NAACCR Record Layout Version 9 for the SSS2000 code (Data Item 759). Pre-2001 summary stage codes should be stored in a separate field (Data Item 760) in a registry database. However, because summary stage codes themselves are not changing (e.g., “0” will still mean “in situ,” etc.); because the coding system will be assumed, based on diagnosis date; and because SSS1977 codes will not be translated into SSS2000 – a vendor might choose NOT to create a new internal variable to hold SSS2000. Table 4 outlines the options and impact of the two possible decisions for internal storage of SSS2000.

Table 4: Implementation Options for Vendors and Central Registries (related to whether to use one or two fields for internal storage of Summary Stage)

<p>Recommended Option: Create a new field to hold SSS2000.</p>	<p>Alternative Option: Use the existing Summary Stage field to hold SSS2000.</p>
<p>Issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reports displaying summary staging data over several years will need to take into account how the data are stored. 2. NAACCR record version 9 requires that SSS2000 be reported in a different field than SSS1977. 3. The metafiles from NAACCR, CoC, and individual states will assume that SSS1977 and SSS2000 are in separate fields. 	
<p>Advantages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It may be appropriate that deliberate action will be required to group SSS1977 with SSS2000, since the rules for assigning codes have changed. 2. No special logic will be required to read or write a NAACCR version 9 record. 3. No special logic will be required to utilize standard EDITS metafiles on stored data. 	<p>Advantages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It will be simple to develop multi-year reports describing summary stage.
<p>Disadvantages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If combining summary stage data over several years <u>is</u> appropriate, more programming will be required than if the data were stored in a single field. 	<p>Disadvantages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unsophisticated data users might prepare inappropriate multi-year reports describing summary stage, if it is <u>not</u> appropriate to combine SSS1977 and SSS2000. 2. When reading or writing a NAACCR version 9 record, diagnosis date will have to be queried for each record in order to correctly read/write the summary stage field (do I read/write item 759 or item 760?). 3. If EDITS will be run on stored data (before it is written to a flat file), the holder of the data will have to modify the EDITS logic for summary stage so that it checks pre-2001 cases according to the rules for SSS1977 and 2001+ cases according to the rules for SSS2000.

Registrars will be recording SSS2000 information in the current Summary Stage field (Data Item 760) until NAACCR version 9-compatible software is available from their vendor. When a facility's database is upgraded to be compatible with NAACCR version 9, codes from Data Item 760 should be moved to the SSS2000 field (Data Item 759) for all cases with diagnosed on or after January 1, 2001. The SSS1977 field should be blank for 2001+ diagnoses after the conversion to NAACCR version 9.

4.3 Population-Based Central/State Registries

Table 5: Population-based Registry Implementation Needs and Availability

Implementation Need	Availability
SSS Manual 2000 (draft PDF version)	December 31, 2000
NAACCR Version 9 EDITS metafiles	January 1, 2001
SSS Manual 2000 (final PDF version)	January 2001
NAACCR data exchange record conversion (Version 6, 7, or 8 to 9)	March 2001
NAACCR data exchange record conversion (Version 9 to 8, 7, or 6)	March 2001
SSS Manual 2000 (hard copy)	April 2001
Program to convert EOD to SSS2000*	April 2001
Software upgrade to Version 9	July 2001
Updated manual report forms	Varies by registry

* needed only by registries that collect EOD

4.3.1 Recommendations for Population-Based State/Central Registries

All cancer data collection systems must be able to import or export a NAACCR Version 9 record in order to properly handle SSS2000. The Uniform Data Standards Committee approved a new data item in the NAACCR Record Layout Version 9 for the SSS2000 code (Data Item 759). Pre-2001 summary stage codes should be stored in a separate field (Data Item 760) in a registry database. However, because summary stage codes themselves are not changing (e.g., "0" will still mean "in situ," etc.); because the coding system will be assumed, based on diagnosis date; and because SSS1977 codes will not be translated into SSS2000 – a central registry might choose NOT to create a new internal variable to hold SSS2000. Table 4 outlines the options and impact of the two possible decisions for internal storage of SSS2000.

Registrars will be recording SSS2000 information in the current Summary Stage field (Data Item 760) until NAACCR version 9-compatible software is available from their vendor. Until the upgrades are available, facilities will continue to report cases to their state registries using their existing software. Central registries will simply need to convert the incoming data records to the format that their software

of the SSS Manual 2000 for a list of recommended edits. Examples of new edits are that 7 is the only allowed SSS2000 code for leukemias, and that SSS2000 codes 2, 3, and 4 will be specifically excluded for lymphomas.

5 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1: *For cases diagnosed before January 1, 2001 that are accessioned after January 1, 2001 what summary stage scheme should be used?*

Answer: The Summary Staging Guide (1977) coding scheme should be used for any case diagnosed before January 1, 2001.

Question 2: *Will SEER, CoC, NAACCR and NPCR expect old records to be converted to SSS2000 codes, or can old records remain in SSS1977?*

Answer: SSS1977 codes cannot be converted to SSS2000. Old records must remain coded in SSS1977.

Question 3: *Under what circumstances will it be appropriate to combine SSS1977 with SSS2000 for multi-year reports?*

Answer: The answer to this question will not be known for several years. Studies will be required to compare the impact of the new coding rules on each site. Studies might consist of comparisons of the results from mapping EOD codes, or of abstracting the same cases according to the two coding systems. The results of this work will be distributed as soon as it is available.