

To: The Cancer Registry Community

From: CoC-SEER-NPCR Technical Working Group

Date: 21 November 2013

Subject: Grade coding instructions to be implemented for cases diagnosed 1 January 2014+

The coding of grade (**GRADE, DIFFERENTIATION OR CELL INDICATOR [NAACCR Item #: 440]**) has become complicated over time by the introduction of specialized site-specific grading systems. In addition, the coding instructions listed in CoC's FORDS Manual and SEER's Coding Manual differed. Therefore, a small group has been meeting to see if a consensus on grade could be reached among CoC, SEER, and NPCR. The consensus decision was to draft a set of instructions that were simpler, the same among all 3 groups, and in the end, were different from CoC's or SEER's previous instructions. Separate documentation will be produced later to outline these differences.

The 'Instructions for Coding Grade' can be found at <http://seer.cancer.gov/tools/grade/> and are to be implemented for cases diagnosed 1 January 2014 and forward for CoC, SEER, and NPCR. CoC and SEER will incorporate these instructions into their respective coding manuals for 2014. CoC, SEER, and NPCR will notify their respective constituents of their general coding instructions for 2014 including grade.

No codes have been added or deleted. Vendors will not be required to make any changes to software. However, vendors may be able to implement some of the grading instructions electronically to aid cancer registrars in coding the grade field.

Educational materials/presentations will be developed. Short articles/announcements are being developed to highlight some of the changes.

The impact of these new instructions on the analyses of grade trends over time may be substantial for some sites especially prostate. It was difficult to balance changing rules with a desire to keep grade trends intact. For prostate, however, earlier changes based on 'current at the time' AJCC/UICC rules had already wreaked havoc on trying to analyze prostate grade trends.

Many thanks to those who reviewed the instructions. Your comments and questions were very helpful.

The members of the CoC-SEER-NPCR Technical Working Group who drafted this document were Margaret Adamo (NCI-SEER), Mary Lewis (CDC-NPCR), Jerri Linn Phillips (CoC), Joan Phillips (CDC-NPCR), Lynn Ries (NCI contractor), Jennifer Ruhl (NCI-SEER), and Shannon Vann (NAACCR).