

## **Data-Driven Approach to Shaping Community Outreach and Engagement at NCI-Designated Cancer Center**

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### **1. Background**

Since 2016, National Cancer Institute (NCI)-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers (CCC) are required to define their catchment area and conduct research that addresses the cancer needs of their catchment area. The NCI codified the role of the office of Community Outreach and Engagement (COE) for CCCs and fundamentally changed how every CCC was assessed for their performance and impact on the cancer burden in the catchment community. Most CCCs achieve this by assessing and monitoring the cancer burden in their catchment area and addressing disparities and inequities in cancer by facilitating cancer outreach activities, including education and screening and supporting research that prioritizes community needs. Cancer data, within the context of population demographics, and other factors, including social determinants of health and the geographical and cultural environment, play a critical role in identifying cancer needs in the catchment population, informing action, and assessing impact. However, the process is still new to many cancer centers and there are no established or standardized guidelines on how to use catchment area data to inform COE activities.

### **2. Goals**

In this presentation, with key examples, we describe the data-driven approach we have used to restructure the office of COE at the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center (HCC) towards a more community-engaged program.

### **3. Solutions and Methods**

After organizational changes in 2022, the office of COE was restructured into three broad programs: (1) outreach and education; (2) cancer prevention and early detection; and (3) evaluation and research. Backed by relevant catchment area data analyses, the HCC COE implemented several new and expanded initiatives to achieve its strategic goals of identifying and monitoring cancer burden, implementing evidence-based interventions, and catalyzing catchment-area relevant research. Catchment-specific data were obtained from various sources (e.g., Pennsylvania Cancer Registry, HCC cancer registry, census.gov, CDC PLACES) to identify populations in the catchment area with the highest cancer burdens. Based on the needs identified in the catchment area, directors for the three COE programs developed strategic short- and long-term goals, process and impact metrics to achieve COE goals. Data collected on COE activities between 2022 and 2023 further informed changes in ongoing initiatives and planning and/or expansion of new evidence-based interventions.

### **4. Outcomes**

Efforts led to the establishment of a catchment area-representative community advisory board; program #1: informing the mailing distribution list across 29 counties for HCC COE newsletter, flyers, and other communications based on population demographics and cancer burden data; expanding our evidence-based school program to target priority school districts to promote HPV vaccinations among middle and high school children; program #2: implementing a model community health advisory program for lung cancer screening in selected priority areas including urban, semi-urban, and rural area; program #3: facilitating pilot studies that prioritize catchment area-relevant research; and lastly, design,

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sampling and implementation of cancer-focused community needs assessment across the catchment area.

**5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions**

Juxtaposition of COE activities with catchment area cancer burden data will continue to shape the HCC COE's efforts to reduce cancer disparities in our catchment population.