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AACI

Commentary

Highlights From the 2025 AACI CADEX Conference

By *Dinesh Pal Mudaranthakam, PhD, MBA, MS*



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Commentary Overview

- Last month, experts in cancer catchment area data analytics from 70 AACI cancer centers across 40 states gathered in Coronado, CA, for the 2025 AACI Catchment Area Data Excellence (CADEX) Conference.
- The conference provided crucial tools for bridging the gap between raw data and actionable interventions.
- This year's conference theme, "Acquisition, Analysis, Action," was woven into sessions on a range of topics related to data gathering, analysis, and dissemination.
- By fostering collaboration, advancing technology, and prioritizing equity, we can transform data into solutions that improve outcomes for all communities.

In December 2023, VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center hosted the Catchment Area Data Conference – a first-of-its-kind event designed to spark discussion about the intersection of data science and catchment area research. Recognizing an opportunity to amplify the impact of the event, VCU Massey passed the torch to AACI, which hosted the 2025 AACI Catchment Area Data Excellence (CADEX) Conference last month in Coronado, CA.

Preeminent experts in cancer catchment area data analytics from 70 AACI cancer centers

across 40 states gathered to share best practices in data collection, explore policies and methodologies to advance catchment area cancer surveillance, and discuss how artificial intelligence could be used to transform the future of data analysis within the catchment area. The event drew 185 registered attendees as well as support from **VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center**; **Manifold**; **Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Jefferson (SKCCC)**; **Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, UT Southwestern Medical Center**; **UK Markey Cancer Center**; **Moffitt Cancer Center**; **Inspirata**; and **NavOnko**. Participants welcomed the opportunity to network with peers in pursuit of a common goal: lowering the cancer burden in their catchment areas.

Bridging the Gap Between Raw Data and Actionable Interventions

The CADEx conference provided crucial tools for bridging the gap between raw data and actionable interventions. By leveraging advanced analytics, innovative tools, and collaborative dialogue, cancer center researchers and data analysts can transform complex data into meaningful insights that drive evidence-based strategies to prevent and treat cancer. The convergence of expertise showcased at the conference empowered researchers, clinicians, and policymakers to identify disparities, optimize resource allocation, and implement targeted interventions that improve cancer outcomes in their catchment areas.

This year's conference theme, "Acquisition, Analysis, Action," was woven into sessions on a range of topics. These included how to leverage data contained in the electronic medical record (EMR) for outcomes evaluation and structuring teams with geospatial expertise to identify "hot spots" within the catchment area. **Jeremy Warner, MD, MS, FAMIA, FASCO**, Legorreta Cancer Center at Brown University, delivered a keynote that described the digital evolution of EMRs. Another panel, which I moderated, focused on how EMRs can support cancer-related outreach. Presenters were **Cathy Bradley, PhD**, University of Colorado Cancer Center; **Terry Hyslop, PhD**, SKCCC; and **Johnie Rose, MD, PhD**, Case Comprehensive Cancer Center.

The conference also focused on utilizing standardized data acquisition tools and processes to help prioritize a cancer center's community outreach and engagement (COE) objectives. While many cancer centers implement similar community outreach strategies, the specific approaches used to monitor and evaluate community engagement vary widely. Presenters highlighted the pros and cons of data standardization across cancer centers and shared how they track the reach and effectiveness of outreach efforts, cancer prevention and control services, and community partnerships at their centers. The discussion was moderated by **Sandi L. Pruitt, PhD**, Simmons Cancer Center. She was joined by panelists **Frances Harfouche, MSW**, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center; **Jan Lowery, PhD, MPH**, University of Colorado Cancer Center; and **Caree McAfee, MA, CHES**, UK Markey Cancer Center.

With the large number of data tools available, it can be challenging to determine how to use them effectively. During a discussion moderated by Moffitt's **Susan T. Vadaparampil, PhD, MPH**, panelists shared strategies for maximizing the use of data tools and developing best practices in data analytics. They also delved into the importance of intentionally designing products with the end user in mind and explored how different centers and COE departments are measuring their impact with these tools. Rounding out the panel were **Elizabeth Carosso**, Fred Hutch Cancer Center; **Corinne McDaniels-Davidson, PhD, MPH**, UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center; and **Erika S. Trapl, PhD**, Case CCC.

In addition to discussing data analysis tools and applications, panelists focused on identifying the unique needs of specific populations within a given catchment area. Population assessments are crucial for deepening our understanding of the diverse communities we serve through COE activities. Speakers addressed common barriers to population data collection and the pivotal role cancer centers play in reducing the cancer burden. Panelists also discussed the integration of artificial intelligence to improve population assessments while emphasizing the importance of considering a broad spectrum of community assets in cancer center catchment areas. Moderated by Markey's **Todd Burus, MAS**, the panel also featured **Marvella Ford, PhD**, Hollings Cancer Center, Medical University of South Carolina; **Namoonga Mantina, MSPH, MBA**, the University of Arizona Cancer Center; and **Lisa Spees, PhD**, UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Showcasing Innovative Research

Students, staff, and faculty from every AACI cancer center were encouraged to submit [abstracts](#) that highlight data gathering, analysis, and dissemination. We received 44 abstracts in the three-week submission period, underscoring the cancer centers' keen interest in catchment area data

science. Submissions were evaluated through a blinded review process, and three winners were invited to present their work in a panel format. Abstract authors were also invited to display posters during a dedicated session at the conference.

In an era where data-driven insights are shaping the future of cancer prevention and care, the rich diversity of talent and expertise within cancer centers is more vital than ever. Researchers and practitioners are leveraging a multidisciplinary approach—encompassing innovative data acquisition methods and cutting-edge intervention strategies and analytical tools—to uncover and address cancer burden with precision. By fostering collaboration, advancing technology, and prioritizing equity, we can transform data into actionable solutions that improve outcomes for all communities.

Thank you to my colleagues on the 2025 AACI CADEx Conference Planning Committee for helping organize and execute the conference. The input and guidance of the committee were invaluable in making the event a success.

[View Abstracts and Posters](#)

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2025 AACI CADEx PLANNING COMMITTEE



*Pictured above, L to R: Dr. Debby Oh, Dr. Sandi L. Pruitt, Shayla Scarlett, Dr. Peter DelNero, Dr. Christopher McNair, Todd Burus, Dr. Dinesh Pal Mudaranthakam, and Dr. Tracy Onega
Not pictured: Dr. Susan Vadaparampil, Lauren Hackett, Dr. Katherine Tossas, and Alex Zafirovski
Photo credit: Randy Belice*

Chair: Dinesh Pal Mudaranthakam, PhD, MBA, MS
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Our Mission

The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) represents over 100 premier academic and freestanding cancer centers in the United States and Canada. AACI is accelerating progress against cancer by enhancing the impact of academic cancer centers and promoting cancer health equity.

About AACI Commentary

To promote the work of its members, AACI publishes *Commentary*, a monthly editorial series focusing on major issues of common interest to North American cancer centers, authored by cancer center leaders and subject matter experts.

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