

NAACCR GIS *Ad Hoc* Committee
August 2004

About the Committee

The NAACCR GIS *Ad Hoc* Committee was created in July 2004 from the NAACCR GIS Workgroup, which operated under the Information and Technology Committee and has been meeting regularly since January 2001. The group was formed at the request of the NAACCR Board of Directors to address the appropriate uses of geographic information systems (GIS) in cancer registry practice.

Much of the GIS Workgroup's discussions fell into several categories: (1) geocoding patient addresses, (2) confidentiality of data, (3) spatial analysis, or research using registry data in a GIS, (4) cartography, or the representation of cancer data on maps, and (5) Internet access for the disabled. In October 2002, the workgroup published a handbook of basic GIS practices that includes sections on each of these topics. The handbook also included a section on recommendations to NAACCR for future work. The group is currently developing a GIS survey to assess the GIS status and needs of the NAACCR member registries. In 2004-2005, the group looks forward to contributing more of its combined GIS experience and knowledge to advance the goals of the Association.

At this past April's NAACCR Chairs meeting in Orlando, it was felt that the GIS Workgroup's goals are sufficiently different from IT to change the workgroup to a committee that would report directly to the Board. Toshi Abe has been leading the group since its start and has just handed over leadership of the workgroup to David O'Brien, database manager for the Alaska Cancer Registry. The attached roster of members includes GIS professionals from a number of state cancer registries as well as noted GIS researchers at the CDC and the NCI.

Proposed Mission Statement:

The GIS *Ad Hoc* Committee will work towards fulfilling the recommendations and encouraging research in the areas outlined on pages 53-55 in the October 2002 NAACCR publication, "Using Geographic Information Systems Technology in the Collection, Analysis and Presentation of Cancer Registry Data: A Handbook of Basic Practices".

Objectives for 2004-2005:

1. Conduct a GIS survey of NAACCR's members to gain information about current GIS capabilities and training needs. Use the findings of the survey to identify areas where GIS tools or resources may be needed and encourage NAACCR to promote development of resources that could be pooled or shared by its member registries. Use the survey to help provide an opportunity for GIS cancer registry professionals to network. [From Basic Practices Recommendations 6 & 7, page 54]
2. Finalized the release of a report comparing four currently available cluster analysis software products by September 2004. [From Basic Practices research recommendations, page 54]

3. Adopt other relevant GIS & addressing standards and work toward a common set of standards that could be endorsed by NAACCR, NCI, and CDC. [From Basic Practices Recommendation 5, page 54]
4. GIS committee members are participating in a CDC sponsored focus group discussion to help define new GIS Science research activities for the CDC's Comprehensive Cancer Control project. [From Basic Practices Recommendation 5, page 54]