Section V.7
AJCC Staging and Other ACoS Items

Hospitals with American College of Surgeons (ACoS)-approved registries are required to employ the TNM classification system for staging developed by the American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC). Clinical and pathological TNM staging are required by ACoS. The CCR does not require hospitals to report TNM; however, it does request that if TNM (clinical and pathological only) is collected it be transmitted to the regional registry and then sent on to the CCR. There are a number of other data items in this section which hospitals may be required to collect either by ACoS or the CCR.

V.7.1 THE TNM SYSTEM

As the AJCC *Manual for Staging of Cancer* explains, the TNM system "is based on the premise that cancers of similar histology or site of origin share similar patterns of growth and extension. The size of the untreated cancer or tumor (T) increases progressively, and at some point in time regional lymph node involvement (N) and, finally, distant metastases (M) occur." Because classifications are different for each primary site, and coding for extension depends on precise anatomical identification, the AJCC manual must be referred to for data entry unless the coding is provided by physicians in the medical records. But fundamentally the system consists of assigning appropriate numbers or letters to the three fields: T (primary tumor), N (nodal involvement), and M (distant metastasis). For those sites not included in the AJCC Manual for Staging of Cancer, the Summary Staging Guide for Surveillance Epidemology and End Results Group (SEER) is to be used. For a list of these sites, please refer to the *AJCC Manual for Staging of Cancer, 6th Edition.*

V.7.2 DATA ENTRY

In entering data, do not include the letters T, N, or M, even though they are part of the code. Fill in the digits from left to right, leaving the second digit blank if there is no entry for it.

V.7.3 TNM STAGE BASIS

TNM Basis indicates the nature of the information on which AJCC staging is based. The *Manual for Staging of Cancer* provides specific recommendations about which information should be used for each type of staging at each primary site. This field has been prefilled for clinical and pathological staging.

V.7.4   TNM STAGING ELEMENTS (CLINICAL) AND (PATHOLOGICAL)

Consult the AJCC manual for detailed information by site for assigning the appropriate numbers to each element for both clinical and pathological TNM elements. Enter only the numbers, not the letter T, N, or M. If only one number follows a T or N, enter it in the first space of the field, leaving the second space blank. Additional spaces have been added so that there are now three spaces available to record the "T" and the "N" and two spaces to record the "M". The TNM codes generally used are:

T CODES:

TX	= X		T2	= 2
T0	= 0		T2A	= 2A
Ta	= A		T2B	= 2B
Tis	= IS		T2C	= 2C
Tispu	= SU		T3	= 3
Tispd	= SD		T3A	= 3A
T1	= 1		T3B	= 3B
T1mic	= 1M		T3C	= 3C
T1A	= 1A		T4	= 4
T1A1	= A1		T4A	= 4A
T1A2	= A2		T4B	= 4B
T1B	= 1B		T4C	= 4C
T1B1	= B1		T4D	= 4D
T1B2	= B2		Not applicable = 88	
T1C	= 1C			

N CODES:

NX	= X		N2B	= 2B
N0	= 0		N2C	= 2C
N1	= 1		N3	= 3
N1mi	= 1M		N3A	= 3A
N1A	= 1A		N3B	= 3B
N1B	= 1B		N3C	= 3C
N1C	= 1C		Not applicable = 88	
N2	= 2			
N2A	= 2A			