

# Assessment and Recommendations for NAACCR's Committee Structure

---

Presented by  
The Strategic Management Implementation  
Work Group

North American Association of Central Cancer Registries, Inc.



July 25, 2012



## **Assessment & Recommendations for NAACCR Committee Restructure The Strategic Management Plan Implementation Work Group**

### **Background**

In 2010, the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning initiative that resulted in a forward thinking 5 year plan designed “to focus on critical needs, take advantage of emerging opportunities and chart a course that will advance NAACCR into the future.” (Quote by Maria Schymura, Past President)

In 2011-12, the NAACCR Board took a number of decisive steps aimed at the execution of the Strategic Management Plan (SMP). The Board created an SMP Implementation Work Group (SMPIWG) that has focused on implementation of the priorities and objectives developed as part of the SMP. In this first year, initial activity has targeted communicating SMP priorities and objectives to existing committees to ensure that the work of NAACCR continues. In addition, the Board has examined key priority areas within its direct accountability, realigned its monthly meeting agenda to synchronize with the SMP, along with renewing the role of the Board/Committee liaison. More recently, the SMPIWG has initiated an evaluation of NAACCR’s current committee structure to further strengthen the organization’s ability to address the SMP’s goals and objectives. Finally, at the 2012 Annual Meeting, the Board approved continuation of the SMPIWG for an additional year. This report addresses the activities and recommendations related to the committee review.

### **Methods**

The SMPIWG was charged with evaluating NAACCR’s organizational structure to ensure alignment with its mission. Previously, a management assessment of NAACCR, done in conjunction with the development of the SMP, indicated that the present system of committees, workgroups, ad hoc groups and special entities was complex, unwieldy and duplicative. Staff roles and leadership were often not clearly delineated. The SMPIWG met in Atlanta with staff on February 1, 2012 for a day long intensive meeting to examine future options. Using a decision tree analysis, the group worked through an assessment of NAACCR’s current complex committee structure. Decision tree analysis is a structured approach that allows multiple alternatives to be assessed and possible outcomes evaluated in a thorough and balanced process. Once the committee assessment was complete, the organizational structure itself was considered. Business processes, information sharing, role definition and resource consumptions were examined.

Members of the SMPIWG recognized that the strength of NAACCR lies with its *members* who have an unparalleled understanding of, and technical expertise in, the collection and management of data. It is essential, therefore, that the committee structure of NAACCR *engage and incentivize* its members,

foster communication, provide flexibility and adaptability, promote innovation and utilize resources judiciously.

Currently, NAACCR has a Board of Directors (with 2 subcommittees), 10 standing committees, 2 *ad hoc* committees, and 2 special committees as well as a plethora of subcommittees, working groups, liaisons and task forces. Each entity requires a chair or leader, qualified members, staffing and resources. Many groups evolved over time based on short term needs or special interests. The preliminary evaluation of the present structure by the SMPIWG group identified the following opportunities for improvement:

- Ensure a systematic approach to committee structure and formation,
- Avoid “mission drift” in structure and tasks.
- Keep big picture ideals in mind.
- Define roles of Chairs and provide additional support where needed to carry out work.
- Improve communication across committees to avoid duplication of efforts.
- Encourage members to self-identify interest and match volunteer skills with committee work.
- Redefine staff roles in support of committee work.
- Establish a mechanism for monitoring committee progress to enhance communications and outcomes.
- Promote collaboration and multidisciplinary interaction across membership.
- Bolster communication among the Board, committees and the membership.

## **Recommendations**

In light of a rapidly changing technical and professional environment, NAACCR’s organizational structure must be fluid and agile, and initiatives must be focused, with defined timelines and deliverables. Leadership and succession planning must be built into the process. Communication across the organization must be effective. Roles must be defined and aligned with the SMP. Cross discipline functions must be adopted and a team approach embraced.

Using the recommendations from the Atlanta meeting as a foundation, the SMPIWG continued to refine and develop a proposed structure. It reviewed a variety of organizational structures in considering these factors as it sought a best fit for NAACCR. **After careful deliberation, it recognized that NAACCR needs a flatter, more nimble structure that relies less on standing committees and their multiple subgroups and more on workgroups and task forces with responsibilities that are goal oriented, outcomes driven and have defined timelines.** Importantly, NAACCR needs to preserve its communal underpinning so its rich volunteer talent is used effectively and member experiences are rewarding and productive.

Based on this reasoning, the SMPIWG is recommending a shift in organizational design to a more matrix driven approach that is aligned with the 5 SMP priority areas. The proposed new structure

focuses NAACCR's rich volunteer talent on achieving SMP major goals while being accommodating, relevant and valuable to members.

Key Elements to the New Approach include:

- Members with self-identified interests in a particular priority area are organized into collaborative *networks*, designed to enhance exchange of ideas, collaboration and mutual support.
- Five Steering *Committees*, working closely with the Board, will be established to carry out specific priority area objectives and tasks. Each Steering Committee is responsible for the planning, implementing and monitoring of their priority area, while also encouraging shared knowledge, supporting connectivity and fostering innovation across their network.

More detailed descriptions of the key roles within the new structure are described below:

Board of Directors: The Board is elected by membership to govern the organization and has legal, fiduciary and ethical responsibilities to guide the mission, provide leadership, set policy, oversee strategic direction and assure fiscal solvency. The authority to establish organizational structure, such as committees, work groups and task forces, is a critical Board role that allows the organization to carry out its mission. The Executive Director is an ex-officio member of the Board.

Steering Committee Roles & Function: A Steering Committee, working in partnership with the Board of Directors, leads the overall planning, implementing and monitoring of all tasks surrounding its specific priority area for the SMP. It is also responsible to engage network members by providing opportunities for shared dialogue and interaction, stimulating new thinking and creativity and supporting its member's professional growth and development. A Steering Committee is comprised of sufficient NAACCR members who are experienced and skilled with critical expertise in the priority area. Steering committees may be organized as follows:

- Chair of the Steering Committee is appointed by the Board for a 2 year term. A Co-Chair may also be appointed.
- 1 or 2 Board Liaisons will be assigned to a Steering Committee to ensure consistent two-way communication and a collaborative decision making process between the Steering Committee and the Board.
- A senior staff member appointed by the Executive Director also serves on the Steering Committee ensuring that all activities and functions of the network stay on track.
- Additional members should include experienced and skilled individuals with critical expertise in the priority area.

The responsibilities of a Steering Committee include the following:

- Leads and develops its priority area network.
- Plans, interprets and sets overall direction for priority area.
- Develops annual and long-term work plans.
- Assures that major goals, objectives and tasks are organized and achieved.
- Develops ‘Terms of Reference’ for associated committees, workgroups and task forces.
- Works with committees, working groups or task forces as needed.
- Identifies the best people and facilitates processes for collaborative projects and tasks.
- Assures that the member interests are aligned with various tasks and activities.
- Controls scope and manages approved resources.
- Generates & facilitates innovative problem-solving and open communication across multidisciplinary members and groups.
- Encourages relationship building across network
- Monitors progress & tracks timelines.
- Identifies emerging issues within assigned priority areas and advises the Board if these require integration in future SMP enhancements.
- Reports regularly to Board and annually to members.
- Serves as sounding board for new ideas and opportunities for growth.
- Assesses need for changes to SMP priority area.

Priority Area Networks: A pool of self-identified NAACCR members with a common interest in and commitment to supporting a SMP priority area: Strategic Alliances, Standardization and Registry Development, Communication, Data Use and Research and Professional Development. Networks serve to organize and link members so they may come together to play a variety of roles including serving on work groups/task forces; providing technical expertise; reviewing documents and vetting products; and identifying emerging opportunities. Members may also serve as expert sounding boards for registry issues, special reviews or concerns related to the priority. In addition, networks function to facilitate member learning, collaboration and shared problem solving. All NAACCR members will be encouraged to participate in one or more networks of their choice. Membership is voluntary, self-selected and open. Members may move from one network to another at any time and serve on multiple networks concurrently. In addition, the Board may also recruit specific individuals to assure robust skill sets and expertise across networks. Network membership will be renewed annually unless an individual opts out.

Key expectations of the Networks are:

- Provide a self-identified, multi-disciplinary pool of NAACCR members that have interest in a specific priority area.
- Function as a resource pool for populating all organizational groups associated with a priority area (e.g. Steering Committee, committees, work groups, task forces).
- Serve as sounding board for gauging and assessing evolving issues of importance to central cancer registries

- Assist as reviewers of standards documents, policy statements and draft reports as required.
- Provide an informed audience for identifying emerging issues in a priority area and for providing feedback to the Steering Committee and Board.

### Staffing & Other Structural Issues:

The proposed organizational structure relies heavily upon coordination, communication and control of work processes. As such, staff will play a major role in the overall management of work flow and will be critical to ensure that goals are met. It is proposed that staff serve as ex officio members on each steering committee. Their roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined and lines of authority established. It is also anticipated that new skills and training will be required.

The SMPIWG recognizes that NAACCR staff already carries a heavy workload. It also understands that the complex nature of some steering committee's work may create significant pressures that will need to be addressed by the Board. The staffing needs of NAACCR remain a critical concern that requires careful deliberation if this new structure is to be successful.

Other issues that need to be considered in more detail include how the strategic alliances and communication steering committees will be organized. At this time, these areas are under-developed and special efforts to enhance these important priority areas should be considered.

### Working Definitions for Committee Restructure

This section outlines the types of entities that the Board recommends for itself and each Steering Committee to use for carrying out their work. Steering Committees, through their Board liaison(s), will recommend to the Board what committees, work groups and task forces may be needed under a priority area.

- Committee: A group of team members who *accept responsibility for major goals and objectives*. Committees tend to be *ongoing* and with no identified endpoints or anticipated termination.
- Working Groups: Groups of experts brought together to accomplish *a measurable objective*, a major project or a defined activity such as data assessment or pathology data standards. Working groups usually have a defined scope, are technically focused with specific recurring or *ongoing deliverables*.
- Task Forces: A group of team members with complementary skills brought together to accomplish a defined and specific task in a *set period of time*. Task Forces are often *need-based or event-driven* and then disbanded upon completion of work. Examples of possible task forces include abstract review, confidentiality and volume III.
- Advisory Group: A long-standing group of volunteers that meets regularly and plays strong supportive roles by building relationships, expanding the reach of the organization and identifying opportunities for growth and development.

## Implementation Schedule

At the 2012 Annual Meeting, the Board reviewed and approved the proposed organizational structure pending certain clarifications and recommended revisions. It also extended the SMPIWG for an additional year to complete the committee restructure. In addition, staff and chairs were briefed on the plan with some initial feedback obtained. As such, agreement to move forward with the current plan was achieved. The SMPIWG will organize a carefully planned roll out of the new structure in stages over the coming year. While the chart provided at the end of this report lays out the big picture for the structure, it is only through careful thinking and assessment by the Steering Committee for each priority area that the various committees and workgroups should be established. The anticipated process will include the following steps:

- Formation of steering committees will be staggered over the course of the next year to ensure the overall process is manageable and doesn't impede the work of the organization as full implementation takes place.
- Initial call to members to join one or more priority area networks per timelines established above. (It is noted that members can continue to register or change their network membership at any time to a priority area.)
- Step by step roll out of new structure over identified timelines
  - Formation of Steering Committees
  - Formation of SMP Priority Area Networks
  - Assessment of committee/working groups/task forces requirements by steering committees.
  - Development of Terms of Reference for committees, working groups and task forces by Steering Committees
  - Review and approval by Board of each priority area organizational structure and work plans
  - Solicitation and Recruitment of network members for committees, working groups and task forces
  - Launch of committees, working groups and task forces over specified timeline.

The current target will be to have all steering committees, priority area networks, major working group and task forces in place by June of 2013.

# Diagram of NAACCR's Committee Structure

