Chemotherapy Lookup Tables: Documentation and Use

# Background

In addition to tumor and patient characteristics, the Tumor Registry contains indicator variables for all first course treatments received by patients diagnosed with cancer. For chemotherapy, tumor registrars abstract all data from the electronic medical record (EMR) for patients diagnosed with cancer. They document whether or not chemotherapy was given as part of first course treatment and the date first course treatment began. These treatment and tumor characteristic fields are extracted into our VDW. While the VTR contains vital information needed for research projects, there are some data elements that are missing:

* The actual drug regimen used in first course treatment is not extracted. This leaves 2 options to get the actual drugs given in first course chemotherapy: a) manual chart review, or b) create an algorithm to go against administrative/claims data. Since manual chart review involves a great deal of time and money, an algorithm was created that goes against the VDW in order to characterize all courses of systemic therapy.
* The VTR only contains first course therapy and current projects would like knowledge of all courses of systemic therapy given.
* The addition of the BEACON module in HealthConnect made the task of identifying chemotherapy regimens. However, systemic therapy data needs to be combined for the time periods prior to BEACON as well as claims received from patients referred to outside cancer centers. Therefore, in order to capture all data across all time periods and in order to account for treatments coming through different sources, the creation of these tables and this algorithm was essential.

# The Chemotherapy Lookup Tables

The chemotherapy lookups tables contain lists of NDCs, CPT, and HCPC codes that indicate a patient may have received systemic therapy. The two different look up tables include: rx\_codes, and px\_codes. With these tables you can identify specific systemic therapy drugs, supportive meds used in conjunction with chemotherapy drugs, and non-specific infusion and non-specific receipt of systemic therapy codes.

The tables are updated as needed (usually yearly) with new codes.

# How the lookup tables work

The lookup tables can be merged with VDW pharmacy, infusion, and procedure tables. All systemic therapy from the different content areas can be combined together through a common variable called “CHEMOCAT”. The CHEMOCAT variable is usually the generic name of the drug.