

ACCC's 2003 Cancer Program Administrator Survey

BY MONIQUE J. MARINO

In January 2003 the Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) conducted a web-based survey directed to its 680 cancer program administrator members. More than 32 percent of them responded—an extraordinary response rate for any survey. Survey results were posted on ACCC's Members-Only Web Site (www.accc-cancer.org/membersonly), but here's a snapshot of what we found.

Overall, cancer program administrators are highly credentialed, with the majority of respondents (78 percent) having a master's degree and more than 15 percent holding three or more academic degrees.

Half of the cancer program administrators reported that they were already on staff when they had applied for their position or were approached by management. However, nearly 30 percent of respondents were recruited by an outside firm or a non-affiliated institution.

More than 21 percent of the cancer program administrators report to the chief operating officer at their institution, followed by 13 percent who report to the chief executive officer. Nearly half of the cancer program administrators specified other individuals to whom they report, including a chief nursing officer or chief nursing executive, a vice president of patient care services, and a vice president of support services.

When asked about the size of their staff, the answers varied across the board. Almost 43 percent of respondents reported direct supervision of between 6 to 10 people, with nearly 25 percent directly supervising a staff of between 21 to 30 individuals.

Cancer program administrators devoted extensive time and effort mentoring staff and assisting staff understand and support organizational policies and objectives.

When asked specifically about their financial management activities, cancer program administrators spent the most time and effort developing and managing cost-effective, efficient operations; developing an annual operational budget; and ensuring adherence to operating parameters. Reimbursement issues were also important to cancer program administrators.

The majority of cancer program administrators have been in their position for more than 5 years (57 percent), with less than 5 percent having attained the position within the past year. When asked about job satisfaction, most cancer program administrators were either very satisfied (40 percent) or satisfied (42 percent) with their position. Only 2 percent of cancer program

administrators said they were very dissatisfied with their current position.

Cancer program administrators' salaries ranged from a low of \$46,000 to a high of \$225,000. The average salary range was \$92,699 and the median salary range was \$88,000.

In terms of their *total* annual salary (includes all sources), cancer program administrators provided answers ranging from a low of \$46,000 to a high of \$235,000. Out of 202 respondents, the average total salary was \$97,575 and the median salary was \$91,000.

Interestingly enough, only 46 percent of the cancer program administrators reported receiving bonuses and incentives.

The vast majority of survey respondents worked for community-based cancer centers (78 percent), followed by consortium or multi-hospital systems (14.5 percent), university-based cancer programs (13.5 percent), and NCI-designated centers (3 percent). More than 90 percent of the institutions were not-for-profit.

The oncology marketplace is healthy, with more than 62 percent of respondents reporting competition with three or more cancer centers. Only slightly more than 8 percent of respondents said that they do not compete against any other cancer centers. The size of the institution's primary market varied widely. Only 3 percent of the cancer centers served a population under 50,000, while nearly 22 percent of the cancer centers served a population of more than 1 million. ☐

Monique J. Marino is managing editor at the Association of Community Cancer Centers.

