

Knowledge Acquisition Session Report

Session Date: Tuesday, March 24, 1998

Session Topic: Overview of the Cancer Information Service (CIS) Branch of NCI

Knowledge Analysts: Lisa Mantock and Mike Corley, ScenPro, Inc.

Organization: Office of Cancer Information, Communication, and Education – NCI

Session Location: NIH - Bethesda, MD.

Time: 11:00 am

Type of Session:

- Interview Task Analysis Scenario Analysis
 Concept Analysis Observation Structured Interview
 Other:

Documentation: PDQ Search Request Form/Checklist, Cancer Information Service (CIS) Regional Map, and CIS Call Report Form

General Topic Area

Cancer Information Service Roles and Responsibilities

Session Goals:

- Identify and represent internal and external information flows for the CIS.
- Establish data collection procedures for incoming CIS calls.

Report Summary

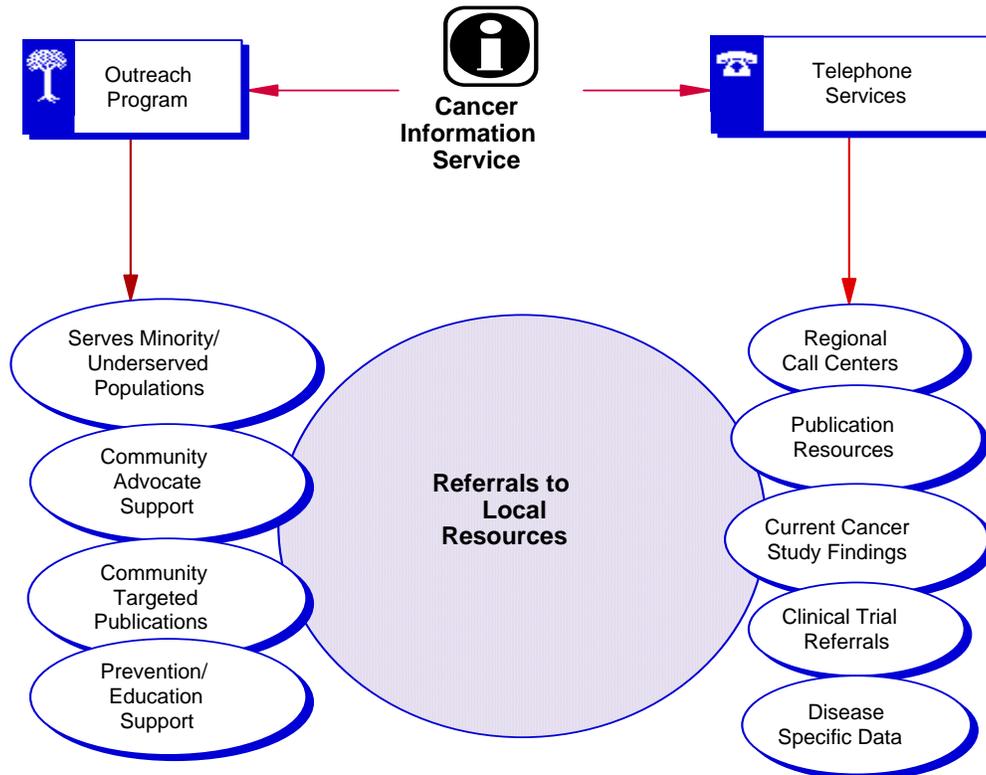
Chris Thomsen is the Chief of the Cancer Information Service Branch (CIS) of the Office of Cancer Information, Communication, and Education for the National Cancer Institute (NCI). The CIS branch provides up-to-date cancer information to patients and their families, caregivers, and community organizations. In addition to providing disease specific cancer data, treatment and prevention information, and research findings; the organization also provides patients with information and referrals to local cancer resources and services.

The CIS was established in 1975 and was initially designed to provide the general public with reliable, easily-accessible cancer related information. In 1976, the first full year of CIS operation, the service handled fifty thousand calls from the public. Since its beginning 22 years ago, the CIS has expanded its publicly available services well beyond the initial telephone information system. In 1997, the organization took more than six hundred thousand calls and is a highly sought out resource for cancer patients, community-based organizations, and the clinical research segments of the National Institutes of Health.

The report that follows is based on an initial interview session with Ms. Thomsen.

Organizational Structure

The CIS is made up of 2 major functional areas; Telephone Services and The Outreach Program. The attributes of these services are represented in the diagram below.

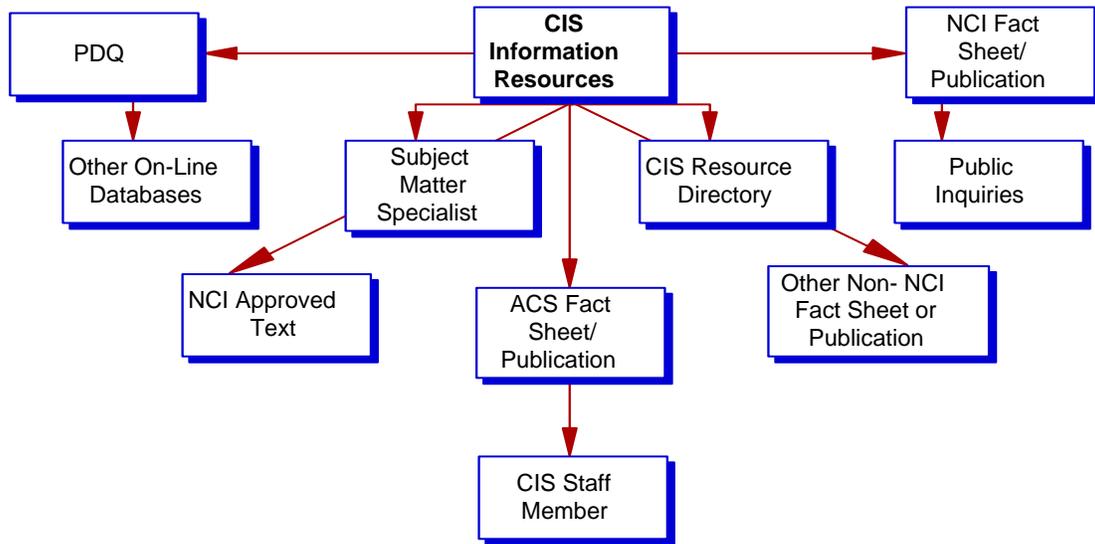


Telephone Services

The CIS is divided into 19 Regional Call Centers located throughout the Continental US, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. The regional call centers receive in excess of 2000 calls per day and were designed to meet the following needs:

- Provide the general public with easy access to current, reliable cancer related information
- Provide cancer related information to patients in a manner consistent with the average level of education in the region
- Provide cancer related materials that support the ethnic and cultural make-up of the regional population

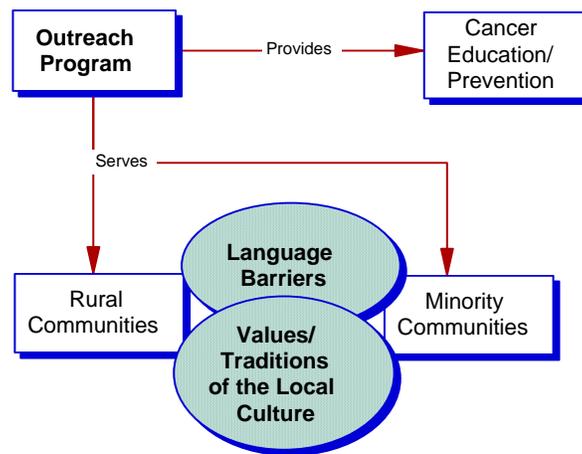
Approximately 95% of all CIS callers receive follow-on literature after the initial phone consultation. When additional research is required to meet a caller's information needs, a form is completed and the request is provided to a CIS database researcher. These requests are usually for current clinical trial information, detailed data on a specific drug type, or updates on existing disease specific cancer research.



The Outreach Program

The CIS has formed a strategic partnership with selected national, regional, state, and community organizations in a project called "Outreach". This program was formed to ensure that individuals and communities that have limited resources, have equal access to reliable, state of the art information on cancer treatment and prevention. Additionally, the program provides a customized approach to cancer related literature based on the cultural make-up of a community.

CIS partners in the Outreach program represent trusted friends within their local communities. Many of those served through Outreach are minority and/or underserved populations, as well as, communities with distinct cultural climates. These groups require a tailored approach to gathering and utilizing available cancer related resources. By teaming with community advocates, the CIS is able to increase it's ability to meet the needs of cancer patients and their families.



Research

The CIS refers over 100,000 people a year to research studies (clinical trials). Each one of the regional CIS offices has an electronic link to the NCI. This enables cancer information specialists to deliver the most current, and the most accurate cancer related information to callers.

One of the primary research resources used by the CIS is the electronic clinical trials database in the PDQ. The CIS conducts customized searches for patients, caregivers, and health care providers using the PDQ on-line services.

Another research focus of the CIS is the support of studies in behavioral research. CIS information specialists work closely with investigators to gather and track behavioral data to support ongoing medical research initiatives.