NAACCR Call for Data

Description of new items:

Two indicators of the rural-urban environment based on the census tract of the diagnosis address:

- Urban Rural Indicator Codes (URIC) is based on the Census Bureau's identification of urban and rural areas
- Rural Urban Commuting Areas Codes (RUCA) is based on the USDA's Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes

Cases diagnosed between 1995 and 2004 are assigned a code based on the 2000 U.S. Census. Cases diagnosed since 2005 are assigned a code based on the 2010 U.S. Census.

Rationale for change proposal:

Studies have shown that residents of rural areas have lower screening rates, lower rates of follow-up of abnormal screening tests, higher late-stage diagnosis rates, and differences in cancer treatment patterns. Including tract-level indicators of rural-urban residence in the NAACCR data files will facilitate research in rural-urban disparities and allow researchers to control for rural-urban differences in model-based analysis of cancer risks and outcomes.

Allowable values:

- URIC :
  - 1: all urban – the percent of the population in an urban area = 100%
  - 2: mostly urban – the percent of the population in an urban area < 100% and ≥ 50%
  - 3: mostly rural – the percent of the population in a rural area < 100% and > 50%
  - 4: all rural – the percent of the population in an rural area = 100%
  - 9: unknown or not applicable – census tract not available or tract population was zero at the last decadal census
- RUCA
  - 1: urban commuting area – RUCA codes 1.0, 1.1, 2.0, 2.1, 3.0, 4.1, 5.1, 7.1, 8.1, and 10.1
  - 2: not an urban commuting area – all other RUCA codes except 99
  - 9: unknown or not applicable – census tract not available or RUCA code = 99

Comments:

The two indicators represent different measures of the rural-urban environment. The URIC is a measure of the rural nature of the place of residence and can be an indicator of access to recreation, access to food stores, exposures to pollutants, crime levels, social cohesion, etc. The USDA RUCA-based indicator is a measure of the proximity to large urban centers and can be an indicator of access to oncology specialists and cancer treatment facilities. Both indicators have been tested for uniqueness and they do not allow the identification of individual census tracts as long as the county is not known. Therefore, the county variable will not be released in the same database as the RUCA and URIC variables.

Related data items:

- RURALURBAN CONTINUUM 1993. Item #3300 (a county-level indicator)
- RURALURBAN CONTINUUM 2003. Item #3310 (a county-level indicator)
- CENSUS TR POVERTY INDICTR, item #145