

Case Study: State Health Registry
January 2002 – July 2002

University of Iowa

SEER Abstracting Component

Original Challenge

The University of Iowa State Health Registry records data pertaining to cancer instances throughout Iowa. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the University contracted with Genova to develop a cancer data software application for their abstractors.

These abstractors travel among hospitals to collect data so NCI can perform statistical analyses. They needed a tool with sufficient data fields to enable them to answer a variety of questions that had been dictated by special studies from the American College of Surgeons (AMS).

NCI had two major problems with their existing tool. First, system flaws prevented abstractors from collecting sufficient data. Second, they needed to gather information more quickly, according to AMS guidelines. But NCI's existing tool was not easily adaptable to new rules, and their original contracting company responded too slowly to changing customer requirements.

Genova Solution

So NCI hired Genova to analyze and document requirements for the tool. The Institute also wanted Genova to develop, test, and deploy the new tool. Our development team included a Senior Systems Analyst, a Senior Systems Architect, Senior Software Engineers, a Software Engineer, and a Database Administrator.

Genova met with NCI staff and investigated the existing software to document initial requirements. Genova used an adaptive lifecycle development process to provide the customer with a deliverable every 4-6 weeks. In this way, our team could make course corrections and provide modified requirements rapidly.

Future Benefits

The NCI Abstracting tool was finished on time and within budget. Our comprehensive documentation traced requirements from initial capture, through design specifications and software coding, and finally into the test plan and validation procedures.

“Because of this new tool,” the abstractors commented, “we were able to complete 50 percent more abstracts... and we are very satisfied.”