AJCC Staging

	Determine if case is eligible for clinical and/or pathologic staging	
	Clinical	**Pathologic**
Purpose	Used to determine treatment	Used to provide prognosis, outcomes and determine of adjuvant treatment is needed
Rules for Classification	- Must have cancer diagnosis and an exam - Workup could include: - Physical exam - Diagnostic biopsy - Imaging reports - Scopes - Exploratory surgery without resection - Endoscopy, colonoscopy - Statement that "rest of exam negative" is enough to consider LNs and mets as negative	- Requires excision of primary tumor or organ - Exceptions **Pathologic** confirmation of metastatic disease **Pathologic** evidence of highest T **and** highest N - Removal of at least 1 regional LN - Includes what is known from clinical stage and adds operative findings and surgical resection path report **Three roads to pathologic stage** 1. Surgical resection of primary tumor and at removal of at least 1 LN - LN exception for in situ tumors, additional exceptions for AJCC 8th edition 2. **Pathologic** confirmation of BOTH highest T and highest N categories 3. **Pathologic** evidence of M1 disease
Timing	- Starts with cancer diagnosis - Ends when definitive treatment starts - Or, within 4 months of diagnosis, whichever is *shorter*	- Starts with cancer diagnosis - Ends with completion of first course definitive surgery - Or, within 4 months of date of diagnosis, whichever is *longer*
Common errors	- Assigning clinical stage when cancer was incidental finding at surgery. Leave TNM fields blank and assign Stage Group 99 - Not assigning T when information is available in physician statement or imaging report	Assigning pathologic TNM or stage group with incorrect use of clinical values and X value

Understand the use of Blank and X

Blank

Blank = info not available OR doesn't meet staging criteria
- Valid only for TNM categories
- Use when you know staging was done, but info is not in chart
- don't default to X

X

X = cannot be assessed
- Valid only with T and N categories
- Not a default
- Not equivalent to unknown

Clinical

- cTX – patient not examined, no imaging or workup
- cT blank – no access to information when abstracting case
- cT blank – incidental finding at surgery

Pathologic

- pTX – resection performed, but the specimen was lost or destroyed
- pT blank – no surgical resection
- pT blank – no access to information when abstracting case

Have the rules for classification for T been met?

Yes

T and N will not be blank

Must be valid value or X

Data Item	Value
Clinical T	cT2
Clinical N	cN0
Clinical M	cM0
Clinical Stage	2
Pathologic T	pT2
Pathologic N	pNX
Pathologic M	cM0
Pathologic Stage	99

No

T and N will be blank

Data Item	Value
Clinical T	
Clinical N	
Clinical M	
Clinical Stage	99
Pathologic T	
Pathologic N	
Pathologic M	
Pathologic Stage	99