

Researchers develop new resource to aid in cancer surveillance at US cancer centers

October 24 2023, by Elizabeth Chapin

Cancer incidence (age-adj; 2014-18)

All cancer sites

576.0–622.37

539.53–576.0

508.49–539.53

475.72–508.49

379.55–475.72

A

Cancer incidence (age-adj per 100k)

All cancer site

State cancer profiles, 2015 - 2019

382–432

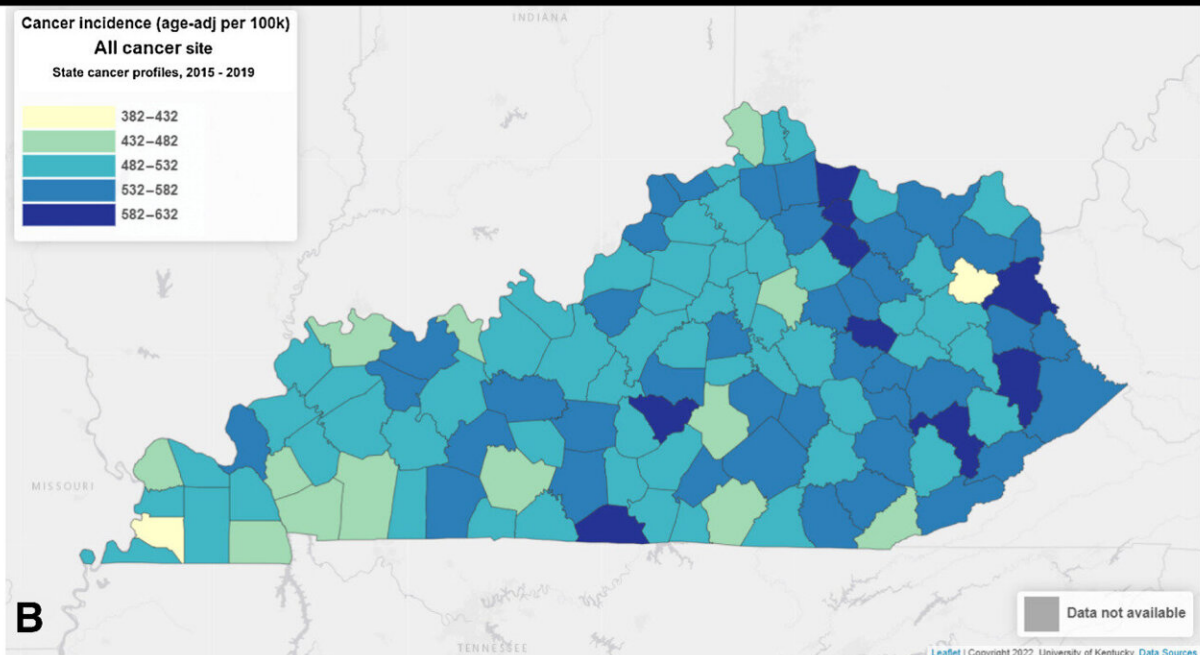
432–482

482–532

532–582

582–632

B



Examples of output from Cancer InFocus applications. A, Output generated by ArcGIS JavaScript application. B, Output generated by R Shiny application.

Credit: *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* (2023). DOI: 10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-22-1319

With the creation of Cancer InFocus, the University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center's Community Impact Office introduced a new tool monitoring the geographic burden of cancer. This resource—launched in 2022—combines powerful data collection software with an interactive online application to accelerate gaining insight from data in the fight against America's second leading cause of death.

A recent article [published](#) in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* documents Cancer InFocus' development. Along with giving the technical specifics behind this resource, the article also highlights its potential to drive change in communities. Such potential has already been realized locally through the Commonwealth's own version of the Cancer InFocus application.

"Cancer InFocus: Kentucky has been a [valuable tool](#) in support of Markey's mission to improve health equity and reduce the burden of cancer in our state. It empowers our researchers, staff and trainees with accurate and up-to-date data, enabling them to develop targeted strategies that address the unique needs of the populations we serve," said Pamela Hull, Ph.D., associate director of population science and community impact in the UK Markey Cancer Center and an associate professor of behavioral science in the UK College of Medicine.

But Kentucky is just one of the places benefiting from the use of Cancer InFocus. To date, 16 other cancer centers have adapted this resource to their service areas, and six more have indicated interest in following suit. Allowing for such widespread adoption was an intentional part of Cancer

InFocus' design.

"We built this software so that it could be applied to any set of U.S. counties," said Todd Burus, data visualization specialist with the Community Impact Office. "It pulls Kentucky data and makes a Kentucky-focused application because we give it Kentucky's counties as input. If another [cancer center](#) wants data and an application for any other part of the country, all they have to do is change the counties they feed into the software and it does the rest."

This feature, along with an open source format that allows [end users](#) to customize the final product to their center's needs, makes Cancer InFocus an efficient and inexpensive solution for cancer surveillance at institutions of all sizes.

"Our hope in developing Cancer InFocus and sharing it with our colleagues at other [cancer](#) centers is that using it will allow for more time and money to be available for doing work on the ground in our communities," Burus said. "We want to democratize [data collection](#) and visualization so that it becomes one less barrier to the outcomes we all desire."

More information: Justin Todd Burus et al, Cancer InFocus: Tools for Cancer Center Catchment Area Geographic Data Collection and Visualization, *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* (2023). [DOI: 10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-22-1319](https://doi.org/10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-22-1319)

Provided by University of Kentucky

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