

Pharmacists: Front line allies for clinical trials education

CISCRP is aiming to join forces with pharmacists as a way to help educate thousands of patients about clinical trials.

With over 56,000 pharmacies in America (according to the National Association of Chain Drug Stores), working with pharmacists to help educate the public could have a major impact on patient interest in clinical trials.

Pharmacists already discuss drugs, treatments, and side effects with patients. Talking about clinical trials is a logical extension of their daily interactions with the public. Right now, pharmacists are an untapped resource for community outreach.

CISCRP is hoping to change that by engaging pharmacists in educating the public about clinical trials.

Pharmacists are well-respected by the public and considered highly credible sources of information about drugs. According to Edith Rosato, RPh, newly-elected President of the National Association of Chain Drug Stores Foundation, pharmacists have been the most trusted healthcare professionals in annual surveys for more than ten years. Among all professionals, the latest Gallup Integrity Poll found that the only ones more trusted than pharmacists were nurses and elementary school teachers.

Surveys help bring strategic knowledge

In order to develop a closer working relationship with pharmacists, CISCRP is planning to conduct two surveys: one for patients and one for pharmacists. The survey results could give insight into how best to create educational material and provide information for the public about clinical trials.

The patient survey will go to patients. It will focus on several areas including: how responsive patients would be to receiving clinical research information from their pharmacist; what type of health and clinical research information do they expect to receive; and what would be the best way for patients to receive pharmacy-directed clinical research information. Eli Lilly & Co. will be funding the patient survey.

Another goal is to prepare pharmacists to speak with patients about clinical trials, including the risks, benefits, and how to find trials in their area.

The pharmacists' survey will attempt to find out how much pharmacists currently know about clinical research, their attitudes and perceptions about the importance of providing clinical research information to patients, how much they currently inform patients about clinical trials, and how receptive



they would be to receiving educational materials on clinical research. This survey will bring a better understanding of how to engage pharmacists in educating patients about clinical research.

Pharmacists' involvement in clinical trials education will benefit patients, clinical trials investigations, and pharmacies. Community members will recognize that their pharmacists can discuss the latest clinical trials as well as standard treatment. This enhanced perception of pharmacists could help drive traffic to pharmacies.

CISCRP is currently seeking additional funding to develop and conduct the pharmacists survey. To talk further about sponsoring the survey, please contact Diane Simmons, CISCRP CEO, at 781-326-3400 or write to info@ciscrp.org.