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# BUILDING BRIDGES

## Between Health Care Providers (HCPs) and Clinical Research

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A guide to building relationships that benefit patients and the public



The Center for Information and Study  
on Clinical Research Participation

## Why is there a gap?

Health Care Professionals (HCPs) have direct access to thousands of patients whom they see on a regular basis. Patients often report having a high level of trust in their HCPs and a recent CISCRP study found 64% of the public believes people should learn about clinical research through discussions with their doctor and nurse<sup>1</sup>.

Yet, less than 0.2% of patients are referred into clinical trials by their HCPs<sup>2</sup>. With enrollment and retention levels remaining low, we need to identify opportunities to partner with HCPs to engage patients in clinical trial participation<sup>3</sup>.

### HCPs cite 3 main reasons for this gap:

1. Limited access to information about local trials
2. Limited time to learn about local trials
3. Lack of familiarity with local research centers and staff

### What do HCPs think of clinical research?

- Many view clinical trials as a viable health care option for their patients
- Many report being exposed to clinical research information in medical school
- Very few say that fear of losing patients drove decisions to not refer them into a trial

## How can we make clinical research information more accessible to the HCP

We need to build stronger relationships between clinical research professionals and HCPs through effective two-way communication, efficient screening practices, and streamlined patient education on clinical trials.

This pamphlet shares practical recommendations for strategies to accomplish these goals for both clinical research professionals and HCPs.

## I AM A CLINICAL RESEARCH PROFESSIONAL - What can I do to improve my relationships with HCPs?

### 1) Build Trusted Relationships

- Contact HCPs in your clinical trial recruitment locales
- Target specialists in your trials' therapeutic areas
- Meet in person or via phone to introduce your team, get to know the HCP's practice, and share plans for upcoming trials
- Ask the HCPs about their needs and expectations for clinical research to establish collaboration in addressing unmet patient needs
- Follow up often via each HCP's preferred contact method to solidify relationships
- Create a streamlined process with a single contact person for HCPs to refer patients into your trials

### 2) Share Clinical Trial Information

- Notify physicians and nurses of new clinical trials
- Provide easily reviewable information:
  - High-level overview and length of the trial
  - Eligibility criteria
  - Frequency of all visits, procedures and tests
- Follow up via the HCP's preferred method to answer any questions
- Highlight the potential treatment benefits to align with HCP's goals to improve patients' health

### 3) Be a Research Liaison

- Help HCPs pre-identify potential trial participants on a routine basis
- Brief HCPs on new clinical trials, answer questions, and remind them about speaking to patients about clinical trial opportunities
- Be available when notified by HCPs to speak with patients interested in clinical trial participation
- Provide HCPs with updates about their patients enrolled in clinical trials

### 4) Provide Educational Materials

- Provide patient-friendly educational materials for HCPs to distribute and place in waiting rooms
- Ensure that your site contact and website information is clearly provided in the materials
- Ensure that there is a clearly identified action for patients who are interested in learning about available trials (e.g., a phone number or web url)

### 5) Stay Engaged During the Trial

- Provide regular status updates on patients' progress in the trial and share results of the clinical trial with the HCP when appropriate
- Let patients know that you plan to stay in touch with their HCP during the trial
- Signal to HCPs that you value and respect their role as the patient's primary care doctor or nurse
- Reinforce that patients' safety is the top priority for all parties involved in the patient's care

#### References

<sup>1</sup> CISCRP's Perceptions and Insights Study <https://www.ciscrp.org/services/researchservices/public-and-patient-perceptions-insights-study>

<sup>2</sup> Getz KA. Examining and enabling the role of health care providers as patient engagement facilitators in clinical trials. *Clinical Therapeutics*. 2017; 39(11): 2203-2213.

<sup>3</sup> Probstfield JL, Frye RL. Strategies for recruitment and retention of participants in clinical trials. *JAMA*. 2011; 306:1798-1799.

## What Can I Do To Learn More About Referring My Patients To Clinical Trials?

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### 1) Connect with Local Researchers

- Contact local research centers and ask how you can become a referring physician or nurse
- Ask if they can provide a research liaison to visit your office with information about active clinical trials
- Look into joining a professional organization like ISPOR, DIA, and ACRP

### 2) Stay Informed on Local Research

- Search for relevant clinical trials for each patient during routine exams using applications and websites
- Stay up to date on the clinical trial landscape by subscribing to relevant journals and publications
- Train your staff on the clinical research process and clinical trial participation so that they are equipped to answer patients' questions

### 3) Engage with Patients about Research

- Make clinical trial education material available in your waiting areas and exam rooms (posters, brochures, handouts, etc.)
- Welcome open discussion when patients ask about alternative treatment options, such as clinical trials
- Identify patients that are best suited for clinical trials and may be more likely to complete all required tests and procedures

# GENERAL RESOURCES

## Search Clinical Trials

CISCRP's public service that compiles clinical trial listings from multiple sources. You can request a free search for clinical trials in your area. | [www.searchclinicaltrials.org](http://www.searchclinicaltrials.org)  
1-877-MED-HERO

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## CISCRP Education Center

Online portal of clinical research information and resources. | [www.ciscrp.org/education-center/](http://www.ciscrp.org/education-center/)

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## ClinicalTrials.gov

Contains a registry of clinical trials in both English and Spanish. Managed by the National Institutes of Health of the Department of Health and Human Services | [www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov) | 1-800-411-1222



### "Education Before Participation"

"BUILDING BRIDGES" is part of CISCRP's Education Before Participation resource series.



An editorial panel of patients, public and professional representatives has reviewed this educational brochure.



CISCRP is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to engaging the public and patients as partners in the clinical research process through education and outreach programs. CISCRP services also assist clinical research stakeholders in understanding public and patient attitudes and experiences in research to improve study volunteer participation. CISCRP is neither involved in recruiting patients for clinical trials, nor is it involved in conducting clinical trials.

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