Applying Catchment Insights to Strengthen Clinical Research Access and Engagement: Developing CCR Cancer InFocus

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1. Background
Understanding who is reached—and who is missed—by clinical research is essential to advancing cancer research and improved cancer outcomes for all. Thus, defining and operationalizing the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Center for Cancer Research (CCR) catchment area is critical to strengthening awareness of and access to its clinical trials. While NCI-Designated Cancer Centers routinely conduct catchment analyses to align research priorities with population needs, applications related to enhancing clinical trials access are recently emerging. To address this gap, CCR launched a collaborative initiative to customize Cancer InFocus (CIF)™, a widely used geospatial data aggregation and visualization platform, for its unique institutional context.

2. Goals
The objectives were to:

- Establish CCR's catchment area based on accrual patterns
- Assess geographic reach and sociodemographic representation across its clinical trial portfolio
- Develop practical use cases to support clinical investigators and research teams in clinical trials related outreach and engagement

3. Solutions and Methods
In partnership with UK Markey Cancer Center, CIF was adapted to integrate population-level cancer burden, clinical and community-level resource, and social vulnerability data with CCR clinical trial enrollment metrics. An iterative, multidisciplinary approach—engaging clinicians as key stakeholders and the original CIF development team—guided implementation, CIF use case, dashboard, and report development. Initial deployment focused on the DC-Maryland-Virginia region, with infrastructure designed for national scale-up.

4. Outcomes
Resulting dashboards and analytic reports to be shared will enable teams to evaluate geographic reach and demographic representation; identify low-accrual areas and underrepresented populations; and inform targeted outreach to patients, providers, and institutions. Additionally, development of practical CIF use cases and iterative changes to interactive dashboards will serve to optimize use of CIF across clinical teams and facilitate meaningful community outreach and engagement connections.

5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions
Future directions include national expansion of the CIF platform, development of CCR-specific analytic reports tailored to investigators, creation of additional use cases, and integration of clinicaltrials.gov data, as well as structured education to support applied use of catchment analytics. By advancing beyond static enrollment reporting and embedding catchment science into clinical research operations, CCR is establishing a scalable, data-driven, and actionable framework for improving trial access and representation.