

Multifunctional Staff Focus Groups as a Tool to Improve Employee Engagement of Clinical Trials Office Staff

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1. Background

Clinical Trial Offices (CTO) encounter common issues with low employee engagement and high employee turnover. This can impact the quality of the research as well as causing a financial strain on the organization because of the cost of onboarding and training new staff. Many health care organizations have started to measure employee engagement and to prioritize measures to improve employee engagement scores. The Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute (KCI) began measuring employee engagement on a yearly basis in 2016 utilizing a standardized survey. Despite several initiatives in 2017, the scores remained lower than desired. The KCI leadership team, including the CTO leadership, was charged with forming focus groups within their departments.

2. Goals

The goal of the focus groups was to encourage staff to take ownership of their department's employee engagement scores and culture, identify key issues affecting the staff's engagement scores, and develop plans that could be implemented by the staff to mitigate these issues. The ultimate goal of these groups was to improve annual employee engagement survey scores.

3. Solutions and Methods

In March 2018, the KCI CTO formed three focus groups consisting of 8-10 staff members each that included representatives of multiple departments involved in implementing clinical trials. The Vice President (VP) CTO identified three staff members who were high performers and "unofficial leaders" of the staff and approached them about leading these groups. Each manager or supervisor within the CTO provided the names of high-performing staff and this list of members was divided to form the three groups with broad representation. The areas represented included study coordinators, regulatory coordinators, research nurses, network sites, administrative, pre and post-award, and research informatics. The focus group leaders were provided with training by the VP CTO and were introduced to the group members. The initial meeting consisted of a "start-stop-continue" exercise to initiate discussion. The groups were tasked with choosing an area of concern to focus on and develop potential solutions. All three groups chose to work on improving communication and met every 2-4 weeks.

4. Outcomes and Future Directions

The focus groups began meeting in March 2018. The groups brainstormed several methods to improve communication and employee engagement. The ideas were presented to the VP CTO for approval and were then implemented. Some of these solutions included the development of: a CTO activities committee, a monthly newsletter (attached), and an anonymous electronic suggestion box for staff to submit their suggestions. The three CTO focus groups were recognized as some of the most active and successful at KCI. The CTO employee engagement survey scores were compared between 2017 to 2018.

The employee engagement category stayed essentially stable from 2017 to 2018, 3.62 to 3.61 on a 5 point scale. However, communication skills improved from 3.16 to 3.30. In addition, the overall employee experience score improved from 3.87 to 4.00. Based on the 2018 survey results, the groups are focusing on career development in 2019. The first initiative has been to have an educational session for the staff about SoCRA and ACRP certification.



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CLINICAL TRIALS OFFICE NEWSLETTER

April 2019

Upcoming Dates

- 4/24 Administrative Professionals Day
- 4/26 Pancake Breakfast and Potluck (CTO Activities Committee)



Weisberg Update

The expansion continues at Weisberg. We continue to use Annex 5 for all of our clinic visits and our infusion area remains in the main building as does radiation therapy, mammogram, and ultrasound.

We are all excited that we will be offering Gamma Knife and this new and improved model will be delivered in April. This is a frameless model and we are thrilled to have it. We hope to begin treating patients in June.

We are beginning Phase 2 of the expansion. This will include the new infusion area and new clinic area. We will keep you posted as to the progress.

Please feel free to come and visit anytime!

Suggestion Box

Please remember to utilize the electronic suggestion box! All suggestions go directly to Lisa Lange and are anonymous (unless you specify otherwise.) This is a great way to professionally voice your concerns and work to improve your workplace! The suggestion box can be found at:

<https://goo.gl/BivfLT>

Newsletter Contacts

For any questions or suggestions regarding the CTO Newsletter, please contact: Anita Crosena, Kathy Reichel, Rena Lewis, Michele Lowe, Angelica Ienciu, Kenneth Foster or Delaney Erickson. Thank you!

Employee Focus: Jason Law, Regulatory Coordinator

Jason Law has been with Karmanos since July of 2018. He began his career at the Cleveland Clinic's Taussig Cancer Institute in 2017 as a Research Coordinator, doing both study and regulatory coordinator responsibilities for lung, GI and Phase I studies. He later became a CRC II at Karmanos specializing in reliance trials.

At Karmanos, Jason currently holds many of the accruing reliance trials in the network. His prerogative is to open as many trials as possible across the McLaren network so patients in underserved areas of the Lower Peninsula have the same opportunity to enroll in clinical trials as those who come to our downtown location. With this in mind, Jason has gone above and beyond to ensure that trials from different disease groups are represented in the network.

One of his current initiatives to have network training and resources available to the CTO. It is his hope that having this information available will help get network trials open faster, help Regulatory Coordinators feel more comfortable working in the network and help sway the opinion of FROC regarding network eligibility for trials.

Jason comes from a background rooted in teaching and is always happy to help answer questions about network studies. Please feel free to contact him anytime!



Department Highlights

OnCore Update

Testing was completed in the Staging Phase as of 3/18/19. End User Testing has been assigned with a deadline of 3/29/19. The Production version of OnCore 15.4 is planned for the end of April. Training for the Financial Events function will occur shortly after the release of 15.4. The purpose of Financial Events is to collect more revenue by getting paid for all study activity. Users of Financial events will come from the departments of Pre-Award, Post-Award, Informatics and the Study Coordinators.

The 1st OnSemble conference for this year, is from 3/26-3/29/19 in Dana Point, CA.

FROC Update

Effective March 4, 2019, The Feasibility Review and Operations Committee (FROC) will now be voting to move each study forward for activation. The vote will be determined by majority vote. A representative is expected to attend from each area. It is preferred that members attend in person, but a call in number is available for those off site. Invited attendees are expected to stay for the duration of the meeting in order to allow for a consistent voting population. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Maureen Kelley at 313-576-8830 or kelleym@karmanos.org.

Coordinators Update

On March 18, 2019, Liz Horvat and Michele Lowe held a meeting to talk about becoming a Certified Research Professional. With over 40 people, they reviewed how to sign up, who is eligible, what to include in the application, exam format/content and recommendations of study materials. They dedicated their personal time to creating slides (which are in the Y drive in the SC folder) to helping others further their careers. This is very admirable and their event was a huge success! Thank you Michele and Liz for your hard work!

Staff Changes/New Employees

- Rahneta Stephens (3/20)
- Anh Minh Trinh (3/22)
- Chase Conrad— promotion to CRC II (2/3)
- Aileen Erickson— promotion to CRC II (2/17)
- Carol Wells— promotion to CRC II (2/17)
- Elise Doppel— promotion to CRC II (3/17)
Congrats to all on your promotion!
- Liz Horvat— transfer to QA Specialist (3/21)
- Dina Farhat— transfer to ROC (3/21)
Good luck to Dina and Liz with your new positions!
- DeQuindalyn Moore (last day 4/11)



Open Positions

- SC-2 Mal Heme, 1 GU, 2 BMT, 1 Lung, 1 ROC, 2 Ph I
- Downtown DET (1 Malign Heme, 1 GI, 1 REG)
- DET WSU (1 GI, 1 Malign Heme)
- Activation Coordinator (CRC II)— 1 Network, 1 Downtown
- Radiology liaison, CRC II