

## **Improving Staff Engagement and Retention Through a Staff Engagement Committee and Subsequent Collaboration Between Staff and Management**

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### **1. Background**

The Clinical Trials Office (CTO) at New York University's Perlmutter Cancer Center, recognizes the importance of staff retention and engagement to patient safety and successful operation of oncology clinical trials. In response to turnover of staff in the Clinical Coordination Unit (CCU) a survey of CCU staff was performed. The Staff Feedback Survey (SFS) showed room for improvement in key areas that impact staff retention and engagement.

### **2. Goals**

The SFS sampled 29 of 29 CCU Staff. 20 CRNs, 8 CRCs, and 1 RA.

Survey Results related to retention and engagement:

In your current role do you feel supported?

Yes: 69% No: 31%

In your current role at the CTO do you feel valued?

Yes: 44.8% No: 55.2%

Do you have enough time during your work day/week to get everything that is required of you done?

Yes: 44.8% No: 55.2%

In your experience is your personal professional growth supported at the CTO?

Yes: 65.4% No: 34.6%

### **3. Solutions and Methods**

A Staff Engagement Committee (SEC) was formed with members from both the CCU and senior management. The SEC carries out initiatives that address four key areas for improvement: engagement with leadership, staffing adequacy, teamwork expertise, and advancement opportunities.

### **4. Outcomes**

A repeat of the SFS is planned for 1 year following SEC creation to measure initiative impact.

Selected initiatives:

*Category: Clinical Trial Operations – Work in Progress*

Advancement: CCU staff collaborated with management to create a new clinical job ladder with 3 levels of CRN and 3 levels of CRC to improve career advancement opportunities and retention of experienced staff.

Staff Appreciation: Surveyed staff to collect feedback for an event that staff would enjoy and that would provide an opportunity to bring staff and management together outside of their normal daily routines. Culminated in a staff appreciation event with high levels of participation from CCU staff and management.

CCU Orientation and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Feedback from CCU staff was incorporated into a standardized orientation program to improve the onboarding process for all staff and to ensure excellence across all groups. Standardization based on staff feedback addressed staffing adequacy through adoption of streamlined processes. SOPs that acknowledge current workflows and ensure patient safety were implemented with staff input.

CCU Support and Mentoring: A work group is tasked with the creation of additional support networks among staff members. The working group is in the process of creating a CCU buddy/mentor program that partners junior staff with more senior staff to help build an additional support network that supplements and complements those already available to employees through their managers and official channels.

## **5. Lessons Learned**

Initial responses from staff have been positive and a large proportion of staff are involved with the SEC. The Committee has identified a need to be mindful to include new staff as the CCU grows in order to ensure that the SEC remains representative of all CCU staff. The SEC continuously elicits feedback from current CCU staff through regular meetings and feedback, in conjunction with the planned repetition of the SFS, will determine future SEC initiatives.