

## **Narrowing the Gap – The Synergistic Effect of the Clinical Trials Nurse Liaison**

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### **1. Background**

Research participants can be seen in multiple inpatient and outpatient settings across the cancer institute as a part of their treatment and care on a clinical trial. Implementing strategies to bridge the gap between the clinical trials office (CTO) and these key service areas across the research enterprise is imperative to ensure participant safety, satisfaction, and protocol compliance. In support of this, we identified the need for a supportive link to aid in strengthening our collaborative efforts where we could more formally establish clear lines of communication, improve education related to the care and treatment of trial participants, and define and implement shared work practices and a delineation of duties between the research team and clinical staff members.

### **2. Goals**

- Create a new clinical trials nursing liaison position(s) (CTL) to act as a supportive link between the CTO and the Infusion and Inpatient service lines to share institutional knowledge, provide nursing expertise and ongoing education to team members, in both research and clinical patient care teams, from trial prescreening through activation and trial conduct
- Improve compliance by reducing deviations in the Infusion and Inpatient areas
- Establish formal shared work practice guidance documents to ensure consistency and more seamless continuity of patient care

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

- Collaboration between key CTO and clinical stakeholders to establish funding mechanisms, reporting structure, and a detailed job description for the new CTL position
- CTLs added as members of the Feasibility Administrative Review Committee to vet all new research protocols for the feasibility of clinical integration
- Involvement in SIV and logistics meetings to ensure appropriate resources and education is provided to the study team(s)
- Monthly connection meetings with CTLs and their respective leaders to ensure ongoing process improvement
- Timeline:
  - 2017 – the first CTL position funding approved, posted, and filled to support the Infusion center
  - 2018 – established complex trials team of Infusion nurses to work under the direction of the CTL; further refined job description to better accommodate research efforts based on experience from the previous year
  - 2020 – discussions to add an additional CTL with a focus on Inpatient service areas to support the growing cellular immunotherapy portfolio in solid and hematologic malignancies
  - 2021 – 2<sup>nd</sup> CTL position funding approved, posted, and filled to support Inpatient service areas

#### **4. Outcomes**

- Established new shared work practice guidelines: resulting in improved communication, education, and an overall reduction of protocol deviations
  - After-hours care: transition from Infusion to the Huntsman Acute Care clinic (HAC)
  - Notification of consent and enrollment communication workflow
  - Collaboration on Fast Fact Sheets, Nursing Instruction Sheets, and Drug Administration Sheets

#### **5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions**

- Collaboration and communication to ensure continuous process improvement
- Ongoing consideration of additional CTL positions to support the growth of clinical trials