

## **A Focus on Culture in Response to Rapid Growth: Moffitt Cancer Center's Non-Therapeutic Research Office**

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### **1. Background**

The Non-Therapeutic Research Office (NTRO) at Moffitt Cancer Center is dedicated solely to non-therapeutic research planning, implementation, staffing and oversight. At its inception in October 2021, NTRO supported 85 team members and 525 research studies. As of January 2025, the department has grown to 144 team members supporting 690 research studies that recruit in both the community and clinical settings (exhibiting a 69% and 31% increase, respectively). NTRO leadership has continued to prioritize training standardization and enhanced career development to ensure high quality of work production, maximize team satisfaction, and minimize staff turnover.

### **2. Goals**

NTRO's goal is to equitably, ethically and innovatively reduce cancer burden by supporting non-therapeutic research studies involving human subjects. We believe the most effective way to do so is to create a diverse and knowledgeable team that feels confident in their ability to perform their job duties, supported by available resources, and motivated by career pathways available.

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

NTRO has implemented the following strategies to achieve our goals:

- Standardized training plans for staff: New/tenured team members are provided with a training plan that can be tailored to satisfy specific training needs, ensuring that NTRO staff receive the same foundational training.
- Incorporated tenured staff into training: Tenured staff (who have expressed an interest in growing their leadership/mentorship skillsets) act as "trainers" to reinforce/contextualize content reviewed during onboarding. They introduce new team member(s) to clinical teams, providers, lab staff, etc., enhancing the support network throughout Moffitt.
- Created NTRO specific job aids: In response to non-therapeutic research nuances, we created 40+ NTRO specific job aids and continue to create more as the need is identified by staff/leadership.
- Prioritize continuing education: NTRO staff are encouraged to complete at least 10 hours of continuing education per calendar year, and this is followed up on by their Supervisor/Manager.
- Schedule regular touchpoints: New/tenured staff attend one on one meetings with their Supervisor/Manager, as well as the NTRO Director. These touchpoints maintain an open line of communication to the leadership team and provide staff the opportunity to voice feedback, ask questions, engage in career coaching, etc. We also facilitate monthly "Clinic Huddles" between staff to identify areas for resource sharing/reduce effort duplication.
- Enhanced transparency regarding job descriptions and career pathways: All NTRO job descriptions and career pathways are available to both team members and faculty. These documents detail roles, responsibilities, minimum qualifications and pay ranges.

### **4. Outcomes**

Our efforts have resulted in reducing staff turnover from 40 percent to 8 percent. We have promoted 11 percent (16/144) of our staff YTD in 2025 and have added new leadership positions. We have increased study support as Moffitt opens new ambulatory sites

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

The culture NTRO created is one that establishes lines of communication, maintains transparency, encourages feedback while protecting intellectual safety/trust, and promotes work/life balance. Moffitt's research support needs are increasing, and NTRO remains committed to providing expert level service. Looking forward, we hope to open more team lead/leadership positions to provide additional support, better allocate resources and build upon the developmental career pathways within NTRO.