

**Clearly Lighting the Way: Illuminating the Pathway to Careers in Clinical Research Coordination in the University of Kansas Cancer Center's Clinical Trial Office (KUCC-CTO) with C-CLEAR the Careers in CLinical ResEARch Summer Experience**

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**1. Background**

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for comprehensive clinical research that reflects the full spectrum of our population to understand disease impact and treatment efficacy. While many universities offer summer programs in basic sciences and medical career pathways, few provide training in clinical trial coordination. To address this gap, the University of Kansas Cancer Center (KUCC) developed an internship within the KUCC Clinical Trials Office (KUCC-CTO), equipping students with essential knowledge and experience in clinical research.

The KUCC-CTO is dedicated to developing and fostering a competent workforce that reflects the patient population in our catchment area and combating any bias that might adversely affect clinical trial participants. The Careers in Clinical Research (C-CLEAR) Program is an eight-week immersive experience intended to introduce college students from medically under-resourced communities or those enrolled in institutions that broaden participation in higher education to the field of Clinical Research. This is accomplished through an internship in the Clinical Trials Office at the KUCC, where students shadow Regulatory Coordinators, Clinical Research Coordinators, and other roles. Upon completing this program, students will gain an understanding of Clinical Oncology Research at the local level and how it impacts global cancer combat efforts.

**2. Goals**

C-CLEAR's primary goal is to provide college-level students in our catchment area with the opportunity to explore clinical research in oncology as a career option at the KUCC-CTO. The program's secondary goal is strengthening the cancer center workforce by creating a pipeline to recruit better-qualified candidates for entry-level positions at the KUCC-CTO.

**3. Solutions and Methods**

The KUCC-CTO Training and Education Department developed the eight-week curriculum, which included experiential learning modules on the Informed Consent Form Process (Drafting to Delivery), Regulatory Patient Eligibility Assessment, Document Processing and IRB Submission, and Professional Development.

The University of Kansas Cancer Center Communications Department partnered with a local advertising agency to create marketing materials, manage social media posts on the cancer center's channels with geofenced targeting, and purchase advertisements in local publications. Additionally, virtual and face-to-face meetings and email blasts will be conducted for faculty and staff at colleges and universities to reach students who may be well-suited for the program. Students were required to have completed their second year of college, maintained a 3.0 GPA, and submitted a brief application, letters of recommendation, and transcripts.

**4. Outcomes**

The C-CLEAR Program launched on June 3, 2024, selecting three participants from ten eligible applicants. The student involved in the program represented KUCCs catchment area. The students created three infographics, produced a podcast featuring the medical director of the Phase 1 Clinic, earned their GCP Certification through CITI, and presented their final project on the last day of the program, July 26, 2024.

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

Future directions include creating opportunities to collaborate with more faculty to showcase innovative technology in oncology, enhance community engagement, and strengthen relationships with sponsor partners. This will offer students the chance to learn more about the site-sponsor relationship.