Category: Community Outreach and Engagement & Health Equity – Work in Progress

Enhancing Clinical Trial Education and Outreach in the Mountain West: A Collaborative Approach by Huntsman Cancer Institute

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1. Background

Huntsman Cancer Institute is dedicated to reducing the cancer burden across the Mountain West. To gain insight into the knowledge and beliefs of our rural and frontier communities about health resources and access, Huntsman Cancer Institute conducted a Community Health Assessment Survey and found that 86 percent of survey respondents indicated they knew little to nothing about clinical trials. To address this, a multidisciplinary team collaborated on understanding our education processes, revising our education materials, and testing new ways to disseminate these resources to patients and the community.

Focusing on developing broad and comprehensive clinical trials education for our patients and community in the Area We Serve, this collaborative approach across the Clinical Trials Office (CTO), Office of Community Outreach and Engagement (OCOE), Patient and Public Education (PPE), and the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) resulted in a repository of consistent, accessible materials that will be used across the institution for clinical trials education in order to resolve knowledge gaps and distance as a barrier to cancer care.

2. Goals

The primary objective of the project is the creation of a standardized education protocol via centralization of clinical trials education materials. These will be used by all Huntsman Cancer Institute stakeholders to enhance patient and community knowledge about clinical trials as a therapeutic avenue for cancer treatment. The materials are stratified by levels that correspond to the audience and stage of clinical trial interest/orientation. Additionally, we use different methods of information dissemination, including print, electronic, and virtual assistants (chatbots). Assessing the impact of clinical trial outreach and education on clinical trial enrollment will follow the dissemination, as well as iterating further on materials to enhance impact and accessibility.

3. Solutions and Methods

The CTO and OCOE collaborated to map internal processes and catalogue clinical trials education materials. We identified gaps and barriers and determined that materials revision was needed to address accessibility issues. After multiple rounds of feedback from the PPE team and PFAC, we implemented finalized content and language across print, electronic, and chatbot media. Assessment of patient satisfaction via surveys and the rate of material turnover are in progress. We are also measuring website and chat service traffic specifically about clinical trials as well as impact on clinical trials interest (number of patients who express interest in enrolling after rollout vs. previous years).

4. Outcomes

The primary outcome is an increase in broad knowledge and comfort levels about clinical trials in patients and communities across the Area We Serve. This could impact interest in clinical research and can be assessed via comparison of number of consented, enrolled participants vs. previous years.

5. Learned and Future Directions

The CTO team is creating various education media and collaborating with other NCORP hubs to expand outreach and provide support services to network sites. Next year, we plan to invest in partnerships with affiliates in Idaho, Montana, and Nevada. New initiatives include supporting affiliates with training in regulatory compliance, data management, and quality.