

Fostering Equity in Oncology Trials: A Multi-Campus Approach to Increasing Clinical Trial Participation

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1. Background

Achieving greater diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in cancer care necessitates ensuring that underserved populations have equal access to cutting-edge oncology trials. To address this, we implemented targeted outreach efforts at our Long Island and Brooklyn sites, which serve diverse communities. These efforts included partnering with the office of Community Outreach and Engagement (COE), creating site-specific presentations, advocating for multi-campus participation during sponsor discussions, and utilizing clinic tools to highlight the accessibility of clinical trials. Through these comprehensive initiatives, we aim to significantly enhance clinical trial accessibility for patients across Brooklyn and Long Island, fostering a more inclusive and equitable approach to cancer care.

2. Goals

- Increase awareness of clinical trials.
- Enhance multi-campus participation in clinical trials to serve diverse populations.
- Ensure clinical staff are well-trained to discuss clinical trial participation opportunities.
- Increase diverse clinical trial accruals

3. Solutions and Methods

Collaboration with the COE was essential, as it allowed Perlmutter Cancer Center (PCC) Clinical Trials Office (CTO) leadership to understand and address perceived barriers to trial participation. One primary challenge identified was the lack of knowledge about clinical trials. In response, the CTO team developed an informational brochure to be shared with patients, their families, and the community. To ensure staff are well-trained to discuss clinical trials with potential participants, we developed and delivered tailored educational sessions for investigators, nurse navigators, and community health workers (CHWs). These sessions provided general information about clinical trials and highlighted the capabilities of our Brooklyn and Long Island sites, fostering greater engagement with clinical research. To further increase awareness of clinical trials, we implemented various tools and strategies within the clinic, such as large “ask me about clinical trials” pins worn by staff and investigators. Additionally, our research team joins weekly rounds with Brooklyn-based nurse navigators and CHWs to help identify potential trial candidates. We also actively promoted the inclusion of multi-campus participation in clinical trials during discussions with sponsors and stakeholders.

4. Outcomes

The PCC CTO has established an ongoing relationship with the COE, nurse navigators, and CHWs, and we continue to collaborate on new initiatives to further enhance clinical trial accessibility and participation. Industry sponsors have reviewed and approved the inclusion of Long Island and Brooklyn campuses as additional sites on clinical trials during pre-site sponsor visits, resulting in expanded access for all PCC patients. This has led to increased patient enrollment from these areas and broadened the catchment area, fostering greater representation and improving patient recruitment. The number of clinical trials offered at our Long Island site has increased by 250 percent, from 22 in 2021 to 77 in 2024. Accruals at this location have also grown substantially, rising by 161 percent, from 57 in 2021 to 149 in 2024. At our Brooklyn satellite, since September 2023, 90 percent of accruals (n=18) have been from

underrepresented minorities, and 80 percent (n=16) reside in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), defined as areas with an inadequate number of healthcare providers.

5. Learned and Future Directions

Ensuring the inclusion of historically underrepresented groups in clinical trials requires a multipronged approach along with consistent effort and prioritization. PCC CTO will be piloting an AI prescreening program aimed at identifying trial candidates in an effort to improve efficiency but also eliminate implicit bias. To further enhance patient access to clinical trials, inclusion of Long Island and Brooklyn campuses will be a standard part of the conversation in all future trial discussions. Building on the success of expanded enrollment and the broader catchment area, it is crucial to maintain strong partnerships with pharmaceutical sponsors to ensure trials reflect the diverse patient populations of all campuses. Engaging with sponsors early in the planning process to prioritize multi-campus participation and using enrollment data to demonstrate the benefits of increased patient diversity for trial results and drug development will be essential. We anticipate continued growth and expansion at our Long Island and Brooklyn sites, with a sustained focus on ensuring equitable access and diverse enrollment in clinical trials.