

Recognizing Revenue in a Matrix Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office: Functionality, Issues, and How It Can Be Improved

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1. Background

Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center (LCCC) utilizes an integration between CTMS (OnCore) and Georgetown's financial system (Workday) to help bill for clinical trials. The automated integration removes the manual creation of invoices, thereby streamlining processes. However, LCCC is a matrix cancer center and requires close coordination between the Lombardi Clinical Trials Office (CTO) and centralized medical center (GUMC) clinical research finance operations, via the Lombardi CTO Research Finance Liaison (RFL). In March of 2022, the Lombardi CTO hired a Research Finance Liaison to assist with the coordination between the Lombardi CTO and GUMC's centralized financial team.

2. Goals

The RFL is charged with:

- Streamlining and simplifying billing processes
- Increasing the amount of revenue recognized in real-time
- Ensuring study teams compliantly enter patient visits into OnCore to cue up clinical trials invoiceable within OnCore
- Regularly meeting with the centralized research finance office to ensure LCCC's CTO revenue reconciliation

3. Solutions and Methods

The implementation of a liaison between the clinical operations team and centralized finance operations provides a buffer to ensure that line-items for clinical trials being billed are true and accurate. This helps to not only ensure the Lombardi CTO is paid but also ensure that invoices are being submitted to sponsors and getting paid in real time. Weekly lists are generated by the RFL based on patient activity and then sent to GUMC's centralized operations office to be pushed from OnCore to Workday. The RFL and financial operations team then meet on a weekly and monthly basis to generate invoices along with discussing any issues with invoices or payments coming through bank accounts. The utilization of an RFL has also been effective with troubleshooting any issues with invoices successfully carrying over from OnCore to Workday. In addition to this, the RFL has the capability to generate reports to provide to leadership that paint a picture of the status of billing for clinical trials for a given time.

4. Outcomes

Almost immediately, there was an uptick in the productivity among staff utilizing this system. Over time, the number of invoices along with the amount of revenue went up drastically (\$4.8 million in 2022, \$11.5 million in 2023, and \$13.1 million in 2024). The number of invoices that were pushed through the integration increased as well (219 in 2022, 509 in 2023, 714 in 2024). It was also discovered that there were a number of studies that had been severely underbilled.

5. Learned and Future Directions

Prior to the creation of this position, there was two times less revenue flowing through Georgetown's financial systems. In addition to this, there has been a steep increase in the amount of revenue that has been billed and collected since this position's creation in 2022. Given the specific nature of this role, this position should be held by an individual with clinical experience while also understanding the particular niche of finance in clinical trials.