

Improving Clinical Trial Participation: A Transportation Support Initiative

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1. Background

Adequate and reliable transportation is essential for high-quality patient care. For clinical trial participants, lack of access to dependable transportation can be prohibitive to trial enrollment and compliance. Clinical trials often require more visits than a standard of care treatment regimen, resulting in transportation barriers for patients due to increased travel time and costs. These barriers disproportionately affect low-income and low-resource participants, contributing to underrepresentation in clinical research and negatively impacting trial adherence. While many industry-funded clinical trials offer some type of financial support for participants, this assistance is often limited in scope and may require reimbursement instead of upfront payment. Government funded trials or investigator initiated are even more limited in funds. NYU Langone recognized the pressing need to address these gaps and established a dedicated fund to provide transportation support to patients participating in clinical trials.

2. Goals

This fund aims to eliminate transportation barriers for low-income and under-resourced patients, whether they are enrolled in trials in Brooklyn or Manhattan. The initiative's primary goals are to expand patient access to trials, as well as to improve adherence and retention.

3. Solutions and Methods

The Beyond Bridges initiative, launched by Perlmutter Cancer Center (PCC) and Hospital leadership with philanthropic support, focuses on our Brooklyn community where 25-40 percent of residents live in medically underserved areas. A streamlined workflow identifies, screens, and tracks eligible patients, with the clinical team coordinating transportation. Patients demonstrating need are assessed by social work to determine appropriate resources. Those who qualify receive Uber transportation for clinical trial visits throughout their study participation. Predicted time traveled, patient demographics, and overall protocol participation were analyzed to determine the impact of the initiative.

4. Outcomes

22 patients across 17 protocols routinely utilize the Beyond Bridges program. Of the enrolled patients, 12 (55 percent) identify as a racial minority and 20 (91 percent) live more than 10 miles from their treatment sites. Relying on public transportation, it would take approximately 82 minutes (according to mapping software) each way to attend a study visit. Using ride-share reduced travel time by over 50 percent. Additionally, several individuals continued to use this fund for subsequent trials they were able to participate in. Using the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) database, 19 (86 percent) participants identified as residing in a medically underserved area. These results illustrate how providing transportation to patients in medically underserved areas reduces logistical barriers, enhances protocol adherence, and promotes equitable access to clinical trial participation.

5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Targeted transportation support is a practical and critical strategy to improve clinical trial access and study visit adherence among low-resource patients. This initiative promotes equity in research

Category: Clinical Trial Access (Network, Satellite, and Other Multisite Accrual Enhancement Efforts) – Work in Progress

participation, strengthens the diversity of the clinical trial enrollment cohort, and supports the integrity of trial outcomes, allowing more patients to contribute to and benefit from research. Future goals are to identify similar funding to be allocated from other boroughs in NYC to enhance accrual efforts and improve representation in clinical trials.