

## **Decreasing Patient Financial Burden by Increasing Stipends and Travel Reimbursement**

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### **1. Background**

Clinical trial participants often spend an extensive amount of time at their treatment center. For example, trials often have PK blood collections required for 6-12 hours post-infusion, causing participants to spend their entire day at the institution. This leads to additional expenses the participants and their caregiver would not incur if they were not in a clinical trial including--but not limited to--meals, additional costs for parking/transport, and lodging if they travel more than 2 hours. This all places an increased financial burden on clinical trial participants.

### **2. Goals**

We sought to reduce the financial burden for clinical trial participants on industry studies by providing a stipend as well as travel reimbursement. Additionally, we wanted to reduce the time it took to negotiate the compensation portion of the informed consent.

### **3. Solutions and Methods**

We created a standard Participant Payments Memo detailing our request for stipends and travel reimbursement from our industry partners.

- The memo indicates a request for \$100 per visit as a stipend for all clinic visits. We request that this be paid up to three times at screening as screening often results in additional trips to the institution over multiple days for extensive labs, scans, biopsies, etc.
- The memo also details the travel reimbursement requests including lodging per night, mileage at the IRS business rate, meals, ride share, and air fare.

This memo is provided to our sponsors prior to site selection. Sponsors can agree or provide their counter offer early in the start-up process which helps expedite the consent negotiation process.

### **4. Outcomes**

The average participant stipend in 2019 was \$0 because so few studies offered stipends. Following the implementation of the participant payments memo to our industry sponsors, we saw a drastic increase in the average stipend: 2024 studies that opened averaged \$85.81 for stipends and 2025 studies averaged \$74.41. In addition to the increase in average stipend, our site had no studies offering travel reimbursement in 2019. Of the studies opened in 2024, 58.82 percent offered travel reimbursement in some capacity. In 2025, the industry studies offering travel reimbursement increased even further to 71.43 percent.

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

Our first draft of the memo called for a flat rate travel reimbursement based on mileage rather than receipts. After much discussion, we determined it would be beneficial to base travel and meal reimbursements on receipts so it would not be considered taxable income. For the future, we are focused on simplifying consent negotiations by ensuring the memo is agreed upon prior to negotiating the full budget.