



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

PCLI Webinar

Maintaining a Clinical Research Practice at an Academic Cancer Center

On March 4, AACI's **Physician Clinical Leadership Initiative** (PCLI) hosted a webinar in which **Claire Verschraegen, MS, MD, FACP**, addressed the challenges associated with maintaining a clinical research practice at an academic cancer center, including navigating salary structures in academia (or lack thereof), defining various areas of academic research, and proposing metrics for measuring clinical research activities.

Dr. Verschraegen is director and professor, Division of Medical Oncology, at The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center, James Cancer Hospital & Solove Research Institute. She pointed out that while the number of physicians in patient care has been growing for decades—from about 400,000 in 1980 to more than 900,000 today—the number of physicians in research and teaching has been relatively flat since the mid-1990s, hovering around 15,000 and 10,000, respectively.

Reporting the results of a survey of AACI cancer centers, Dr. Verschraegen noted that, for faculty engaged in clinical research, the most important expectations were: accrual of patients to clinical trials; development of investigator-initiated trials; authorship of peer-reviewed publications; and being the principal investigator on extramural grants and contracts.

In response to an audience question about advocating for staff to receive more competitive salaries, Dr. Verschraegen said that in academic workplaces like hers, such decisions are made by the university at large. That said, one way to affect a colleague's pay level is to change their job description to move them to a higher stratum of salary.

"What makes people stay in a job is the culture and the way you treat your staff," she said. "If they're happy coming to work then a few more dollars isn't going to change their mind."

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Medical Arts Building
3708 Fifth Avenue, Suite 503
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
412-647-6111

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