## Communicating about Cancer Clinical Trials Potential Strategies for Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Leaders &amp; Patient Advocates</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>One on One Messaging</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Practice talking and answering difficult questions about cancer clinical trials with family and friends</td>
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<td>• Look for recent examples about clinical trials in the media as a means of initiating a conversation</td>
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<td><strong>Community Messaging and Outreach</strong></td>
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<td>• Spread the word about cancer clinical trials in one on one settings and through local community activity (either hosting an event or attending as an invited speaker)</td>
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<td>• Prior to a presentation, learn what the audience’s current awareness, misconceptions, and concerns are about clinical trials</td>
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<td>• Use resources, such as <a href="http://www.cancer.gov">www.cancer.gov</a>, to help prepare and distribute related handouts</td>
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<td>• When possible, include past trial participants and cancer trial staff in education activities</td>
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<td>• Deliver take-away messages in formats that are portable, long lasting and reflect the needs and concerns of the diverse communities you encounter</td>
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<td>• Be flexible-use brief presentations, rather than longer workshops, as appropriate for some audiences and venues</td>
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<td>• Train other community leaders/patient advocates (in-person or online education workshops, for ex)</td>
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<td>• Create/adapt education materials on cancer clinical trials (creating palm cards, for ex)</td>
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<td>• Tailor clinical trials education materials and messages for diverse populations (African American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino populations, for ex)</td>
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**Patient Education**

- Discuss treatment options *in general* with the patient
- Mention clinical trials as a viable treatment option and your support for their exploration with oncologist
- Distribute basic information about clinical trials to your patients. Examples include the National Cancer Institute’s Brochure “Taking Part in Cancer Treatment Research Studies” or NCI’s Fact Sheet on Cancer Clinical Trials. Both items are available to view, print or order at [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov). Materials are also available from the American Cancer Society ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)), or the Center for the Information and Study of Clinical Research Participation ([www.ciscrp.org](http://www.ciscrp.org)).

**Patient Referral to Clinical Trials**

- Learn whether the specialists you refer to participate in cancer clinical trials
- Adopt a policy to only refer to those oncologists and surgeons who participate in clinical trials—or who agree to refer out to clinical trials
- Determine preliminary eligibility over the phone or via the Internet for local open trials
- Establish initial contact with the clinical research team
- When making referrals, include a written list of expectations regarding ongoing communication about the patient’s care
- Notify when these expectations are not being met
- Schedule appointment and share appropriate clinical data with the research team
- If the patient is accepted onto a trial, continue to remain engaged by:
  - Communicating regularly with the research team regarding the patient's condition and any significant changes in health status
  - Providing emotional support to the patient
  - Being prepared to continue management of patient symptoms and co-morbid conditions, during and beyond treatment

**Relationship Building with Oncologists and Research Staff**

- Accept invitations by local oncologists and trial staff to deliver “Lunch and Learn” sessions at your site
- Establish/maintain relationships with oncology practices offering clinical trials in your community
### Build External Relationships
- Reach out to physicians where relationships are already established
- Develop local in-service presentations at physician offices
  - Have discussion when physician has time available (breakfast, lunch, etc.).
  - Keep to a brief 20-30 minute presentation.
  - Address whole staff, not just physician.
- Arrange to make presentations before local physician groups, medical societies, etc.
- Develop new relationships with potential referring physicians doing some of these same activities
- Develop a clear policy to maintain communication with the referring providers to keep them informed about their patients

### Identify Patients and Assess Eligibility
- Ensure all patient charts are screened for eligibility.
- Send potential cancer diagnosis reports for review by research nurses who determine available studies patient eligibility.
  - Nurses communicate with physicians who inform patients about trial opportunities.
- Hold weekly team meetings to discuss patients in-between point of diagnosis and initial treatment.
- Track screening rates, eligibility rates, approach rates (and reasons not approached) and reasons for decline

### Approach Eligible Patients
- Provide patients with generic CCT educational material to enhance patient understanding
- Provide patients with welcome letter signed by program leader and patient’s oncologist letting them know clinical trials may be mentioned during visits.
  - Minimize cost and effort by streamlining the process: including the letter in existing new patient packet, having a template letter and electronic signatures on file, etc.

### Enroll Interested Patients
- Anticipate which trials might have non-English speaking patients and build that into the budget of the study.
- Find out whether staff honorariums could be voluntarily donated to institutional fund to address translation services not covered by trial sponsors.
- Explore whether the OHRP-approved “short form” for consent is viable for your institution
- Use graphics to illustrate randomization (e.g. NCI brochure or drawing out the schema in front of patient) [http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/Taking-Part-in-Cancer-Treatment-Research-Studies](http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/Taking-Part-in-Cancer-Treatment-Research-Studies)
- Provide “CLAS Standards” training for clinical trial staff (thinkculturalhealth.org)
- Provide ENACCT on line training for clinical trial staff ([www.enacct.org/yourrole](http://www.enacct.org/yourrole)).

### Retain Patients in Study
- Train all staff—even front desk staff—about the importance of clinical trials, and encourage them to acknowledge participation with the patients.
- Maintain regular phone contact with patients between in person visits to monitor compliance.
- Give patients treatment calendars to assist their planning.
- Make free parking available
- Post signs with directions to the study site office. Be sure the signs are easy to read, large, and bold
- Have a well-organized clinic flow
- Encourage family members to accompany the patients
- Provide flexible appointment times, and try to consolidate visits
- Allow ample time for patients with the clinical trial staff