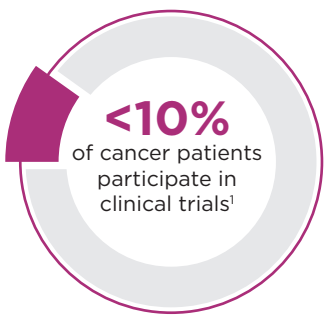
WORLDWIDE CLINICAL TRIALS

# MAXIMIZE PATIENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN EARLY-PHASE ONCOLOGY TRIALS

Successful early-phase oncology research starts with patients, but sometimes it's difficult to find the right participants. And once you find them, how can you make the most of their time-both out of respect for them as patients and people and out of a desire to streamline your clinical research process?

## **PROBLEM:** IT'S HARD TO GET ENOUGH PATIENTS FOR EARLY-PHASE ONCOLOGY RESEARCH




Rare and ultra-rare diseases have a very small number of eligible patients

Very narrow eligibility criteria restrict the potential pool even further

Site locations often leave large geographic areas underserved

## **SOLUTION #1:** USE SMART PROTOCOL DESIGN TO REMOVE PARTICIPATION BARRIERS

- Keep patient access and site convenience top of mind in protocol design
- Identify risk factors-prior to launch-that could harm recruitment
- Separate protocol plans into "need to have" vs. "nice to have"
- Eliminate nonessentials that could make participation harder for sites and patients

## **SOLUTION #2:** PROACTIVELY COMMUNICATE TO ENABLE TARGETED, PERSONALIZED SUPPORT

- Regularly discuss sites' barriers to protocol implementation and promptly provide administrative, staffing, or monitoring support
- Learn about the potential patient population for each site and develop targeted recruitment and retention strategies beforehand
- Foster a strong relationship with sites to encourage their accurate and enthusiastic outreach to patients

## **SOLUTION #3:** VIEW PATIENTS AND SITES AS PARTNERS - NOT COMMODITIES

1. Utilize adaptive design to avoid recruiting more participants in early-phase studies than needed, preserving remaining patients for future phases
2. Consider seamless design to ease site burden, minimize the number of patients needed, and study a broader range of sub-populations
3. Adopt data analysis techniques that analyze as much available data as possible to learn from each and every participant

## **SOLUTION #4:** REMEMBER: LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION


## **SOLUTION #5:** GET STRONG, EXPERIENCED SUPPORT

- Opt for a contract research organization that has a large network of oncology experts and global site support systems
- Work only with groups that understand how to marry science and strategy in study design and execution
- Ensure that support services are nimble and prepared to accommodate changes and hiccups
- Select contract research partners based on their excellent site relationships, rather than pure numbers

**Reference:**

[1] Unger JM et al. Systematic review and meta-analysis of the magnitude of structural, clinical, and physician and patient barriers to cancer clinical trial participation. JNCI. 2019;11(3):245-255.

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Smart planning, patient-centered protocol design, thoughtful site support, and optimized resource networks can help make the most of small pools of potential early-phase oncology trial participants. By using a creative, proactive approach to recruiting and retaining happy patients and happy sites, you can minimize the number of participants needed while maximizing their impact and respecting their time, commitment, and goodwill.

Are you ready to work with the right CRO for your early phase oncology trial?

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