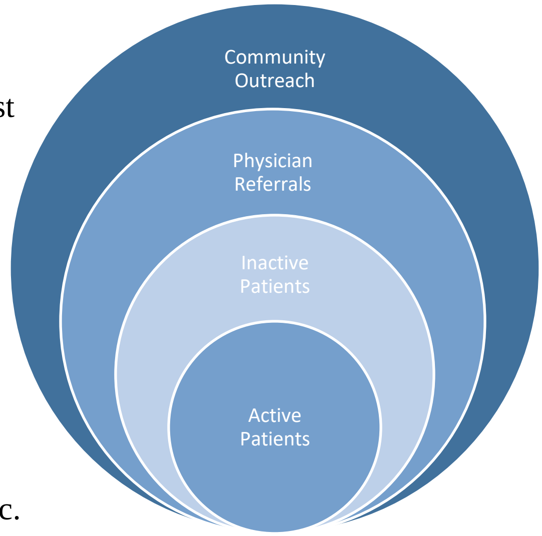
Recruitment Plan 101

More than 80% of clinical trials in the US fail to meet patient enrollment criteria, according to the NIH. Because enrolling a patient into a clinical trial is multi-faceted, it becomes challenging to coordinate the patients, healthcare providers, administrative staff, sponsors, and research teams. Identifying the recruitment barriers upfront is critical. The following can help you and your team formulate a recruitment plan.



1. Know your target population
   - Where will you find them? Start with the inner-most ring of the circle and work outwards. The difficulty of recruitment and costs of recruitment increase as you move outwards.
     - Is this population likely to be on social media? Read the newspaper? Watch the news?
   - How will you identify the eligible population? Epic screening, referrals, face-to-face visits
   - Do any other healthcare providers see this population? Social workers, nurses, pharmacists, etc.
   - What are the benefits and the barriers for this population's participation? Identify and acknowledge them both to the study team and the potential participant.
2. Develop a promotional plan
   - What are the preferences of the target audience as well as healthcare providers and community advocacy groups?
   - What are the informational materials? Do they account for different levels of literacy and cognitive abilities?
3. Develop a mechanism to screen participants
   - Have a dedicated person/team to screen patients when they call in, fill out web surveys, or send an inquiry. Study websites, interactive voice response systems, or a call center can help with this.
   - Know the PI's role in the screening process. Will the PI be meeting with every participant? Consenting every participant?
   - Will a skilled nurse be required as part of the screening process? Or can a non-RN do it?
   - Consider the need for a multilingual team.
4. Accelerate the process from pre-screening to study start
   - Have available appointments ready at the pre-screening so that an additional contact is not needed
   - Provide appointment confirmation materials – date and time of the appointment, directions to the clinic, pre-visit instructions, and study information

5. Track the referrals and follow up
   - Have a system in place to monitor patients who were pre-screened but never came into the clinic for potential enrollment

It is important to keep in touch – with participants, with referring physicians, with community leaders. This keeps everyone engaged and thinking about the clinical trial. It will also help with future recruitment!