



**Community-Campus
Partnerships for Health**
Transforming Communities & Higher Education



Communities as Partners in Cancer Clinical Trials: Changing Research, Practice and Policy

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CONTACT:

Margo Michaels, ENACCT
(301) 562-2774
margomichaels@enacct.org

Sarena D. Seifer, CCPH
(414) 456-8191
ccph@mcw.edu

Five Organizations Selected for National Demonstration Project to Improve Community Engagement in Cancer Clinical Trials

Communities as Partners in Cancer Clinical Trials is pleased to announce that it has awarded grants to five cancer research organizations to improve cancer clinical trial participation through innovative community engagement strategies. The five organizations, known as “implementation partners,” were selected from a nationwide pool of 43 applicants seeking to implement recommendations from the recently released national report, *Communities as Partners in Cancer Clinical Trials: Changing Research, Practice and Policy* (available at www.communitiesaspartners.org).

The five selected Implementation Partners are the University of North Carolina’s Carolina Community Network, Chapel Hill, NC; Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, Nashville, TN; Grand Rapids Clinical Oncology Program, Grand Rapids, MI; Columbia St. Mary’s Health System, Milwaukee, WI; and the American College of Surgeons Oncology Group (ACOSOG), Durham, NC (see brief descriptions below).

Reflecting on the partners and their proposed projects, *Communities as Partners* Co-Director, Margo Michaels, observes, “With 15 to 30 percent of national cooperative group trials closing early due to poor accrual, we are obligated to try different approaches in how we design and implement cancer clinical trials in this country. Many national reports, including ours, have identified community engagement as an essential element in any effort to address this crisis. Our partners have heeded this call to action with innovative local and national projects that will teach us about effective strategies for improving clinical trial participation, especially among underserved communities.”

Communities as Partners Co-Director, Sarena D. Seifer adds, “We sought in this initiative to go significantly beyond traditional patient education on cancer clinical trials and select projects that can serve as models for meaningful, sustained community engagement. Our partners comprise a learning community with enormous potential to inform the emerging field of community-based participatory cancer clinical trials.”

Those selected as 2009 Implementation Partners:

- **UNC Carolina Community Network** will develop a state-wide community advisory board (CAB) to provide guidance to cancer researchers at the state’s three NCI-designated cancer centers. Trained in research ethics and the principles of the cancer clinical research process, CAB members will review Phase III clinical trial protocols for community relevance and feasibility.
- **Vanderbilt Ingram Cancer Center**, in collaboration with Meharry Medical College, the Nashville Latino Health Coalition, the Nashville Health Disparities Coalition, the Nashville Branch NAACP Health Committee, the Cervical Cancer Coalition and Tennessee State University, will conduct a series of town hall meetings to expand community awareness and foster participation of underrepresented groups in

cancer clinical research. Through these meetings, the partners will identify community members for ongoing participation in research activities, including service on research advisory boards and institutional review boards.

- **Grand Rapids Clinical Oncology Program's** newly formed Patient Advisory Board – comprised of cancer survivors and volunteers with experience in clinical trials – will implement an innovative cancer clinical trial public awareness campaign for the medical community, allied health professionals and the general public in Western Michigan.

- **The ACOSOG Patient Advocate Committee** will strengthen the community perspective in the national clinical trial development process by defining the roles and responsibilities of patient advocates serving on national cancer cooperative groups. Developed through a national survey, this standardized definition will enhance advocate recruitment, orientation and involvement throughout ACOSOG and other national cooperative groups.

- **Columbia St. Mary's Health System** will increase the number of underserved Hispanic and African-American patients on its cancer clinical trials by implementing targeted improvements in their informed consent process—such as staff cultural competency training and modification of consent forms and processes—to better address the needs of non-English speaking and low-literacy patients.

About the Sponsoring Organizations:

The Education Network to Advance Cancer Clinical Trials (ENACCT) is the only national organization devoted solely to implementing and evaluating clinical trial educational efforts. ENACCT's mission is to identify, implement and validate innovative community centered approaches to cancer clinical trials education. In its work, ENACCT: Develops and delivers the highest quality, evidence based, community-focused clinical trials education programs for health care providers, patients, and the public; offers high quality, fee-based services that enhance the capacity of organizations conducting cancer clinical trials outreach, education and recruitment; and advocates for the inclusion of appropriate cancer clinical trials education as a top national priority. For more information, visit www.enacct.org

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) is the only national organization devoted solely to promoting health (broadly defined) through partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions. CCPH's growing network of over 1,800 communities and campuses are collaborating to promote health through community-based participatory research, service-learning and other partnership strategies. CCPH believes that only by combining the knowledge, wisdom and experience in communities and in academic institutions will we solve the major health, social and economic challenges facing our society. Based at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, CCPH advances its mission through information dissemination, training and technical assistance, research and evaluation, policy development and advocacy, and coalition-building. For more information, visit www.ccph.info

About the Communities as Partners Initiative:

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