



MANAGING STUDY PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT SITES: METHODS FOR OPTIMIZING SUBJECT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION THROUGH PRIVATE PRACTICE OFFICES

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Recruiting study subjects via private physician offices is a common research practice because such sites offer several benefits, including existing infrastructure and patient volume. Yet researchers face many challenges with achieving a sufficient sample size and retaining subjects when managing multiple physician offices as a study sites. Many physician offices lack the resources to manage the administrative workload associated with subject recruitment and retention. There are strategies researchers can employ to optimize recruitment and retention efforts when contracting with multiple physician offices. We launched a study in October 2008 to examine outpatient treatment outcomes among a sample of patients seeking treatment for opioid dependence. In order to achieve a sample size of 2000 patients, we targeted several hundred physicians across the United States that have been certified by the DEA to prescribe buprenorphine. A variety of methods were used to maximize study enrollment. Study site physicians were required to attend training about the study and received written training materials. Initially, online informed consent was required. However, paper-based informed consent options were added during the recruitment period to accommodate offices without internet access. Furthermore, we offered to provide these offices with internet-equipped laptops so patients could enroll at the time of their office visit. Physicians received a bi-weekly progress report detailing enrollment status for the study as a whole and for individual study sites. Repeated, targeted outreach to physicians with zero or few patients enrolled was conducted. As a result of these efforts, we were able to meet study recruitment goals. Groups that conduct clinical trials or other patient outcomes studies will benefit from employing similar strategies when managing multiple physician sites for subject recruitment and retention.