

Cleveland Clinical & Translational Science Collaborative (CTSC)
Research Education, Awareness and Learning (R.E.A.L.) Committee
Statement of Purpose

Summary

The Research Education, Awareness, and Learning (R.E.A.L.) committee, an inter-core component of the Cleveland Clinical & Translational Science Collaborative, is funded by an NIH Clinical and Translational and Science Award (CTSA). The committee's purpose is to aid in educating the general public about participation in clinical research, using field-tested materials. Working with investigators, the Committee provides to the public, completed research findings, in community-friendly language, on selected research that may be of interest to a community and, in turn, to represent the types of studies that are seeking volunteer participants. This approach has been valuable in both dissemination of results and promoting the awareness of the need for volunteers, fulfilling objectives of the Clinical & Translational Science Awards.

National Context within the Clinical & Translation Science Award (CTSA) Mission

The National Institutes of Health's (NIH) mission "is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce the burdens of illness and disability." One of the agency's goals is "to exemplify and promote the highest level of scientific integrity, public accountability, and social responsibility in the conduct of science." To accomplish this the NIH "provides leadership and direction to programs designed to improve the health of the Nation by conducting and supporting research..." (<http://nih.gov/about/mission.htm> viewed 2-12-2013)

In 2006, the NIH created the Clinical & Translational Science Award (CTSA) Consortium as "a definable academic home for clinical and translational research. CTSA institutions work to transform the local, regional, and national environment to increase the efficiency and speed of clinical and translational research across the country." (<https://www.ctsacentral.org/about-us/ctsa> viewed 2-12-2013)

The CTSA Consortium has as Strategic Goal 4: Enhancing the Health of Our Communities and the Nation. The mission of the Strategic Goal 4 (SG4) Committee is: "To identify and develop effective partnerships between academic researchers and community stakeholders that allow for participation, discovery, application, and dissemination of science that improves the public's health and reduces health disparities, and to promote the translation of the results of clinical and translational research into practice and public policy." (<https://www.ctsacentral.org/committee/sg4-enhancing-health-our-communities-and-nation> viewed 2-12-13)

The Cleveland Clinical & Translational Science Collaborative of Case Western Reserve University has aligned several goals with the CTSA mission of involving the public:

- Engage Greater Cleveland's communities in bidirectional long-term partnerships that will enhance their knowledge and involvement in research, with a particular emphasis on fully participatory research
- Inform, protect, and support research participants
- Aid researchers in the successful completion of studies through expanded participant recruitment resources
- Integrate activities of participatory clinical and translational research resources

The R.E.A.L. Committee is responsive and contributory to the achievement of these goals.

Organization and Membership

The R.E.A.L. committee was established in June 2010, as a result of the Participant Clinical Interactions (PCIR) Retreat held in May 2010, involving three CTSC cores: Community Engagement, Clinical Research Units, Practice-Based Research Networks.

The R.E.A.L. Committee seeks to have representatives from each of the CTSC cores that involve human subject participation in clinical research. In the current funding cycle (2012-2017), representatives are requested from: Community Research Partners (CRP), Clinical Research Unit Services (CRUS), Practice-Based Research Networks (PBRN), and the CTSC Office of Bioethics (Bioethics). These cores represent inter-institutional efforts of the CTSC partner institutions: Case Western Reserve University; Cleveland Clinic; MetroHealth Medical Center, University Hospitals Case Medical Center, and the Louis B. Stokes V.A. Medical Center. Other organizations who have partnered with the CTSC, and have the same need – to educate the public about participation in clinical research – are welcome to have representatives join the Committee and assist at public events.

The R.E.A.L. Committee Chairperson coordinates all efforts, activities, initiatives and follow-up, of the Committee. The Committee tracks and reports its activities to the Director of Clinical Studies Resources and Training. The Director of Clinical Studies Resources and Training represents the R.E.A.L. committee's activities to the CTSC Governance.

Goals of the Research Education, Awareness and Learning Committee

1. Enhance the general public's awareness and knowledge about clinical research, using examples of completed and ongoing research in Cleveland.
2. Inform and educate the public about participation in research, on such topics as: the value of participation, rights and protections, how to locate studies, how to evaluate whether a study is right for you.

Activities

The R.E.A.L. committee has developed field-tested educational materials about participation in research. These materials are used at a variety of public events such as health fairs, educational programs and other community events in diverse Cleveland neighborhoods and communities. At these events members speak and disseminate information about research and how it has improved our daily lives. Members of the committee seek to raise awareness about research in the general community, discuss protections for research subjects, and engage in conversations regarding health concerns.

The Committee also works with the research community – investigators and research staff – to overcome a common barrier to community engagement in research - difficulty accessing information about which research studies need volunteer participants. Working with investigators, the Committee provides to the public, completed research information and findings, in community-friendly language, on selected research studies that may be of interest to different communities and, in turn, represent the types of studies that are seeking volunteer participants. This approach has been valuable in both dissemination of results and volunteer recruitment.

Continuing Research Education Credits: Research Education, Awareness and Learning (REAL) Training is approved for 4CRECS (CREC-017) through Case Western Reserve University.

Meetings

R.E.A.L. meets once a month. Agendas are prepared for each meeting and notes/meeting minutes are kept from each meeting for record purposes and are available to all members.

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Document Date: 04/22/2013