

STRATEGIC RELATIONS DEVELOPMENT

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BACKGROUND

Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) is a premiere academic facility focusing on patient care within Tennessee and the catchment areas of Kentucky, Mississippi, and Alabama. Historically, VUMC relied heavily on their local reputation for patient referrals. As a result, marketing initiatives were tailored to the local community and not necessarily designed to appeal to national and international patients.

PROBLEM

In an era of digital engagement, it is imperative to remain competitive by remaining relevant, dynamic, and adaptable. Areas needing improvement:

- Marketing modifications in order to create greater visibility among a larger patient population
- Intra- and extramural websites with relevant up to date information
- Communication across main campus and extramural sites to increase functionality and inclusiveness

PURPOSE

Create a **Strategic Relations Development Team (SRDT)** to enhance the visibility and elevate the ranking and reputation of VUMC/Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center (VICC) as a premiere academic institution nationally and internationally.

The aim of SRDT is to:

- Enhance clinical networks and increase referrals
- Expand and modernize communication infrastructure
- Increase visibility and improve reputation

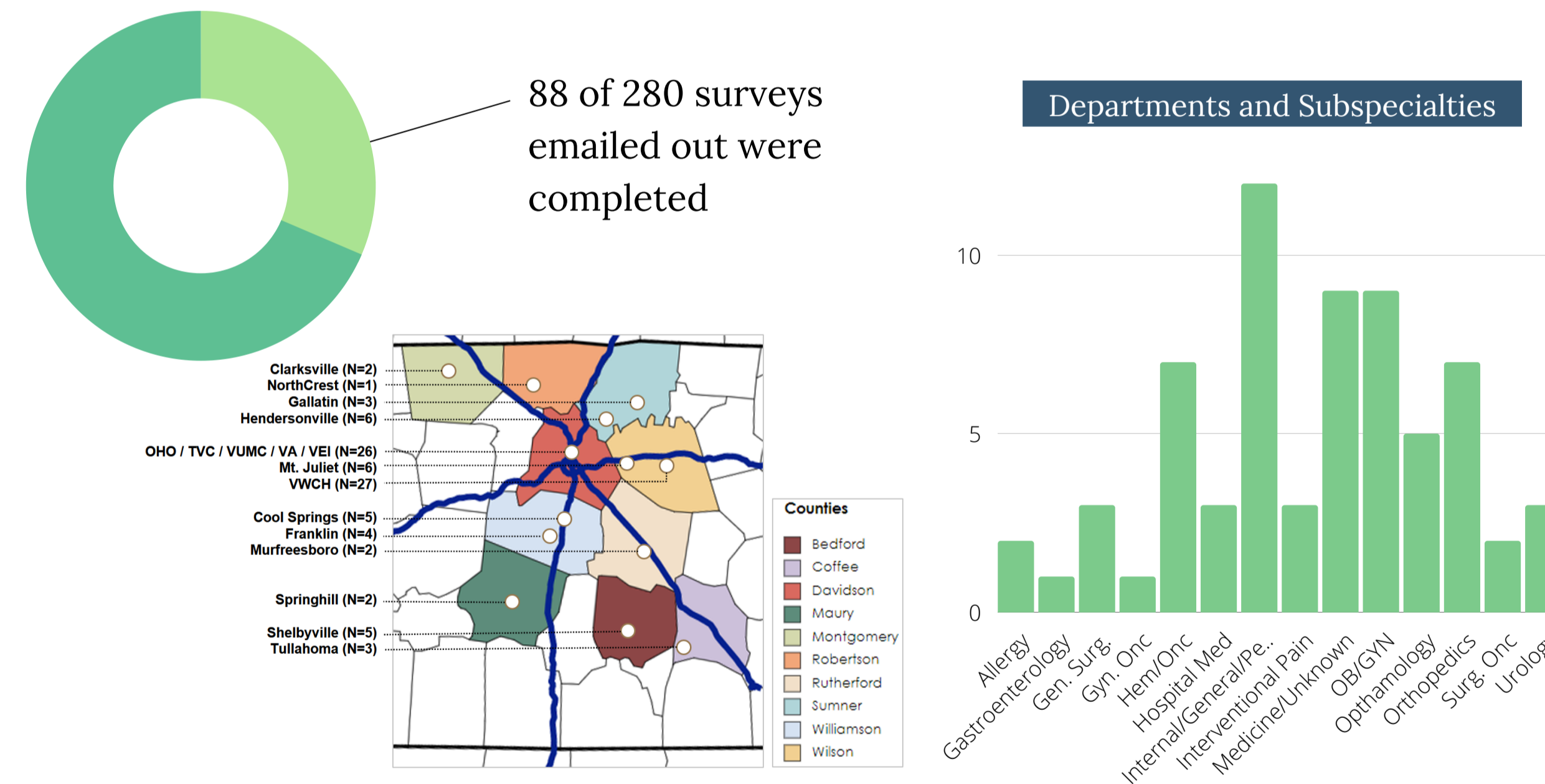


METHODS

Began with a needs assessment and identification of all key stakeholders involved in communication at VUMC. This led to the:

- Review of all existing intranet and internet websites for content and accuracy
- Identification of ongoing efforts, unmet needs, and obstacles in implementation
- Organization of bimonthly meetings with the Department of Medicine (DOM) Chair (mentor) and core team members
- Creation of email master lists
- Creation of two REDCap surveys:
 1. For main campus regarding communication and engagement (pending submission)
 2. For expansion sites regarding communication, engagement, referrals, and website information (completed)

SURVEY RESULTS



Responses:

- 76% had individual comments or suggestions
- 67% are interested in CME opportunities
- 65% report not knowing enough about new specialists or service lines available at VUH
- 60% are interested in a virtual meet and greet with main campus departments
- 50% were concerned about referral to appointment
- 55% admitted they do not know enough about clinical trials at VUMC/VICC

Five overarching themes from survey results:

- 1) Unaware of available service lines
- 2) Unaware of existing clinical trials
- 3) A desire to be more engaged with physicians at the main campus
- 4) Concern about referral times to the main campus
- 5) A desire for more CME opportunities

INITIATIVES CREATED

1. Faculty profiles are being updated with uniform website information
2. Promotion of faculty accolades within and outside VICC
3. Revision of the VICC clinical trials website for improved physician and patient access
4. Creation of a clinical trials newsletter for community provider outreach
5. Creation of a patient education sheet on the purpose of clinical trials
6. Revisions to welcome packets for new patient referrals
7. Increase utilization of the patient advocacy and family advisory council
8. Featuring personal stories of employees within our social media channels to increase pride and engagement
9. Hiring of a DOM communications specialist and web designer

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- Distribution of information to appropriate parties for new strategic relations development
- Continue ongoing scheduled meetings
- Repeat the REDCap survey in 8-12M to determine success of the new initiatives

POTENTIAL IMPACT

The team anticipates increased visibility among a larger patient population, enhanced clinical networks, an expanded communication infrastructure, as well as increased clinical trial enrollment, improved downstream revenue, and increased trust and recognition.

2022 ELAM Institutional Action Project

Project Title: Strategic Relations Development within Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC)/Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center (VICC)

Topic Category: Communications/Strategic Relations

Name and Institution: Cathy Eng, MD, FACP, FASCO; Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC).

Collaborators: Sara Alter, RN, Physician Liaison; Krystyna Barnard, MPS, Communications Manager; Jennifer DeBruler, MD, Vice-President, Patient Access Services, Adult Ambulatory Operations; Michelle Hesselrode, RN, Physician Liaison; Clayton Marshall, PhD, Senior Program Manager; Kelley Robbins, Communications Manager; Theresa Sberna, Chief Business Officer; Deputy Director for Strategy and Analytics and Anne Washburn, MPH, Administrative Director for Community Relations

Mentor: Kimryn Rathmell, MD, PhD, Chair, Department of Medicine, Physician-in-Chief

Background/Significance of Project: Established in 1874, Vanderbilt University Medical Center is a premiere academic facility focusing on patient care within Tennessee and the catchment areas of Kentucky, Mississippi, and Alabama. Historically, VUMC relied heavily on their local reputation for patient referrals. As a result, marketing initiatives were tailored to the local community and not necessarily designed to appeal to national and international patients. After further review, other institutional aspects identified in dire need of updating included linkage of parallel digital search sites, accuracy of web page content, and the lack of strategic communication and social media presence. It is also well known that patients, caregivers, and physician providers utilize the internet as a resource of medical information for symptoms, diagnosis, support, and clinical trial information. In an era of digital engagement, it is imperative for any successful hospital to remain competitive by remaining relevant, dynamic, and adaptable, analogous to successful non-healthcare business enterprises.

Purpose/Objectives: The purpose of this project is to create a Strategic Relations Development team to enhance the visibility and elevate the ranking and reputation of VUMC/VICC as a premiere academic institution in basic science, clinical care, and clinical trial expertise nationally and internationally; improve internal and external communications; and improve employee pride and engagement.

Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy:

- Organize bimonthly meetings with the Chair, Department of Medicine (mentor) and with core team members
- Identify all the stakeholders and discuss the purpose of my role
- Creation of email master lists
- Identify ongoing efforts, unmet needs, and obstacles in implementation
- Creation of a REDCap survey to expansion sites regarding communication, engagement, referrals, and website information
- Creation of a REDCap survey (main campus) regarding communication and engagement (pending submission)

Outcomes/Results:

All faculty profiles were updated with uniform website information. A faculty initiative to promote accolades within and outside VICC was created. We renovated the VICC clinical trials website for improved physician and patient access; redeveloped a clinical trials newsletter for community provider outreach; and created a patient education sheet on the purpose of clinical trials. We revised the welcome packets for new patient referrals. We promoted the utilization of the patient advocacy and family advisory council. We featured personal stories of employees within our social media channels to increase pride and engagement. Our REDCap Survey (16 locations) resulted in 4 overarching themes: 1) Unaware of available service lines; 2) unaware of existing clinical trials; 3) a desire to be more engaged with physicians at the main campus, and 4) concern about referral times to the main campus.

Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Impact/Potential Impact:

Creation of the Strategic Relations Development Committee has identified ubiquitous unmet needs for internal and external visibility, communication, and engagement. With continued implementation, the impact will result in increased recognition of the clinical care and basic science expertise at VUMC/VICC, but also the team anticipates increased clinical trial enrollment, enhanced peer-reviewed and philanthropic support, improved downstream revenue, increased interest from high profile faculty for recruitment, as well as increased trust and recognition.