

## ABSTRACT: 2023 ELAM Institutional Action Project

**Project Title:** Pipeline Program to Build Diverse Research Teams: Engaging Interested Non-Physicians in a Career in Medical Research- A Pilot Program. **Topic Category:** Research

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**Background, Significance of project:** Clinical Research Coordinators and Clinical research data managers are an essential part of any clinical research team. They assure the safety of participants and integrity of research data. A review<sup>1</sup> of labor statistics for research coordinators across the country revealed the following: there are ~37,127 coordinators but only 3.3% are black. Seventy-four percent are white, 12 percent Asian and 9% Hispanic/Latino. Georgia is one of the areas in the country with high demand for research coordinators. There is a report of 655 unfilled positions in the Metro Atlanta area. The current regulatory<sup>2</sup> environment and commitment to health equity requires that clinical trials reflect population norms/epidemiology of the health condition under study. Having a diverse staff is significantly correlated with increased recruitment and retention of volunteers from diverse backgrounds into studies<sup>3,4</sup>. When patients see people like themselves among the site staff, it can make it easier to build trust and encourage understanding which can lead to improved enrollment and retention. To fill this need for diverse study teams, pathways for careers and professional development through mentorship and experience in the field are needed.

**Purpose/Objectives:** This project will advance the objective of creating diverse clinical trial teams by implementing a training and mentorship program for research coordinators and research data managers for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds.

1. Create an online curriculum for training clinical research coordinators (CRC)
2. Deploy first cohort(n=10) of 12-week online CRC certificate program
3. Deploy post certification mentoring/national certification preparation program

### **Methods/Approaches/Results:**

1. Engage with Office of Online Programs to determine course structure, prerequisites, and application process, Obtain approvals for curriculum; create online application and process for participant selection.(Completed)
2. Place curriculum on online learning management system; Create website/landing page for the 12-week clinical research coordinator online certificate program (Completed)
3. Select inaugural class (n=10); launch online certificate (In- process planned completion July 2023)
4. Review evaluation of the course and mentoring process/outcomes (Planned completion April 2024)

**Outcomes/Results:** The first day of class for the inaugural cohort of the program is April 3<sup>rd</sup>2023. The response to the program application has been very enthusiastic with 82 applications received within 2 days of posting the program application. Community Physician Partners view this as an opportunity to enhance their capacity to do research.

**Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Impact/Potential Impact:** The availability of diverse clinical trial teams will support our faculty investigators and Community Physicians Network in their ability to participate in clinical trials. This will significantly increase the number and types of trials our investigators can participate in. Successful implementation strengthens Morehouse School of Medicine's reputation as a trusted partner with the Community in creating health equity and Justice.