

Clinical Research Center Administrator

Carmen Lukovich

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"If researchers and coordinators tell me that a study or clinical trial went more smoothly because of the center's resources, then I know I'm doing my job."

Bio

Carmen became Administrator of her academic health center's clinical research center after a career in clinical drug trials. The center offers the support staff, equipment, and resources to help investigators conducting clinical studies and trials, including various labs, a pharmacy, support with informatics, protocol development, biospecimen collection, specimen processing, and REDCap. The center also provides assistance with grants, subcontracts, new funding streams such as crowdsourcing, and protection of intellectual property. Carmen employs experience and strategic partnerships to identify trends and needs for the center, and to plan accordingly for the center's direction and financial needs. She is establishing metrics to assess the center's operation and services.

Management of the center's budget, strategic planning, personnel, and fundraising are all parts of Carmen's work, through which she employs skills in analysis, negotiation, and teambuilding. Daily Carmen employs full knowledge of clinical operations, and knowledge of her institution's resources and how she can best tap them. Carmen skillfully balances a strategic outlook with a boots-on-the-ground commitment to her center's staff and their well-being.

Education: MS, Chemistry; PhD, Biochemistry

Years of experience: 12

Work location: Have laptop, will travel

Goals

- To grow productive partnerships at leadership level with the local finance and research informatics offices
- To grow the program of investigator training in research methods and scientific writing
- Include the community in PI training to encourage grasp of health disparities
- Institute continuous process improvement



Software attitude & use

- Relies on research administrators and the sponsored research office for reports from financial and budgeting software programs
- Carmen organized the center's website design with employee and front-end developer help
- Web portals: grant management platforms and regulatory and funder websites

Carmen wishes these sites were easier to navigate, often delegating information retrieval to her assistant

- General: Microsoft Office Suite

Scholarly Outputs



- Collaborates on conference presentations with her colleagues in center administration
- Speeches to funding organizations
- Writes and reviews grants

Pain Points

- Needs institutional funds to sustain the clinical research center
- Constant pressure to sweep the fundraising landscape
- Misconceptions about center's remit

Motivators

To optimize clinical research by allowing more trials to be completed with more consented participants, and with quicker initiation times

To facilitate compliance and training that will protect human subjects from harm caused by bad research practice

To save her organization time and money by retaining a talented research staff pool

Wants/Needs

- To implement metrics (or have the CTSA network provide them) to measure study management improvements through efficiencies
- A digital solution to inform researchers about resources available at their institution, such as a web portal encompassing trial and recruitment information, knowledge bases, data management tools, etc.
- To update support staff job descriptions based on a combination of training, skills, and competencies

Professional Development

Carmen ensures the center offers trainings in research methods, grants, scientific writing, proposal development, epidemiology, leadership, community-based research, cultural competency, and use of national public datasets

To improve the center's processes, Carmen wants to survey the PIs and support staff about their needs, but lacks the expertise to write the survey herself and funds to hire a professional evaluator