

The Pulse on Site Success By Jeffrey Adelglass, M.D.

For many years, Research Across America (RAA) has owned a mobile van affectionately known as "Barney" because of its color, purple! We have utilized this mobile van to heighten awareness of our clinical trials in the Dallas, Texas community, posting signage on the sides of the van and distributing literature at related events in the surrounding areas.

Recently, we have taken this concept a step further purchasing a mobile unit that will allow us to take appropriate trials directly "to the people." Lately, we have taken the mobile van onto college campuses to recruit specifically for dermatology trials. Our plan for this activity has required consultation with our IRBs and, of course, study-specific sponsor approval for execution. We now are launching this new program, so the success of our direct-to-consumer engagement model is yet to be proven. However, we are optimistic that the future will hold positive results for this strategy, and we have approval for a new project from a sponsor, CRO and IRB to see patients on the van.

The vision we hold is that the future of clinical trials will include many new methods of delivery that will be cost effective, while taking trials to populations that otherwise may not have access to study participation. I believe it is prudent for investigators to heighten their awareness of such programs, both those existing today and

Pharmacies: the perfect place for patient engagement

Patients are:

- Going to pharmacies because of accessibility, convenience
- Utilizing the services available
- Satisfied with their pharmacy experience
- Trustful of the healthcare professional
- Frequently returning

Source: Accenture at Medical Marketing & Media (MM&M) Conference, June 2-3, 2014

Increased focus on providing additional healthcare services to patients

Clinics are projected to double from 1,418 to = 2,868 by 2015

Clinic services include:

- Treatments for minor and chronic ailments, injuries
- Vaccinations
- Blood tests
- Physicals

Non-clinical pharmacies offer:

- Wellness events, health fairs
- Blood pressure readings
- Disease monitoring, management
- Vaccinations
- Screenings

Source: Accenture at Medical Marketing & Media (MM&M) Conference, June 2-3, 2014

those planned for the future. Some of these programs will challenge the current model of delivery.


One example is the work being tested by Walgreens. The pharmacy giant has initiated a model of delivery of clinical trials in conjunction with Novartis, which brings trials to consumers who access Walgreens directly. While reports of the success of such models are in the early stages of proof of concept, the model makes perfect sense. Walgreens, as one of the largest pharmacy chains in the U.S., has access to not only traffic, but data about potential participants for clinical trials. Over 275 million Americans visit pharmacies each week.

The Walgreens model presents an opportunity to be reckoned with, as well as one to be taken under advisement. The new buzz in healthcare is patient engagement. What better way to engage patients to participate in clinical trials that lend themselves to a less intense trial experience that is appropriate for a pharmacy setting than through the following strategies: the notion of accessibility, convenience, trust in healthcare professionals and an environment in which patients' return to the location is frequent and easily managed.

Previously tested by Pfizer, virtual trials are another potential reality that should be of interest to investigators, both today and in the future. Again, the concept of bringing trials to consumers is not unique, but it remains somewhat unexplored. However, the idea is certainly of major interest to big

pharma and others in the industry. In locations throughout the world where transportation and local geography are common barriers to trial access and patient retention, this has long been considered. For example, in China, Ukraine, Thailand or other regions where culture and distance are common obstacles, the Red Cross and others have had great success bringing clinical trials directly to patients.

Whether via traditional or non-traditional settings for clinical trial execution, the concept of accessibility through proper methods of patient engagement is pivotal. We are hopeful our mobile unit will be perceived as cutting edge, in terms of our community approach.

In the end, it seems pretty simple. How long have we been experiencing mobile mammography and mobile healthcare screenings via such a unit?—at least 15 years. Perhaps it's time the clinical trials sector got on board, so to speak. I will keep you posted on the progress of our new mobile unit and the results of our direct-to-consumer engagement strategy. 

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