Category: Resource Management and Finance – Completed project

Improving Tracking Mechanisms for Utilizing Shared Resources to Identify Key Contributors in the Facilitation of Clinical Trials

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1. Background

As a National Cancer Institute (NCI)-Designated Cancer Center, Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center (Sylvester) is mandated to monitor and document the utilization of the Shared Resources (SR) by investigators. Typically, many centers rely on MS Excel sheets for this purpose, which can present challenges if not update regularly or if files are misplaced through different owners. In response to this issue, we have implemented a REDCap database to track the usage of the SRs for grant award support.

The research support provided by the SRs plays a crucial role in facilitating the ability for Principal Investigators to apply for peer-reviewed and extramural grants. By optimizing the use of SRs to generate necessary data, the chances of securing grant awards are enhanced, validating the grant applications' strength. Once secured, these grants pave the way for clinical trials implementation, emphasizing the importance of tracking SRs utilization for grant application and scientific research advancement through the initiation of clinical trials.

2. Goal

To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of tracking SRs utilization at Sylvester through the implementation of the REDCap database, by enhancing our ability to identify key resource contributors for successful grant submissions and clinical trial activation.

3. Solutions and Methods

- REDCap Database Implementation: Set up a centralized database to track SR utilization efficiently
- Standardized Data Entry: Create uniform procedures for data entry to ensure accuracy and consistency
- Integration with Grant Submissions and Awards: Connect the database with institutional grant award processes to streamline resource identification
- Data Generation: Capture data via targeted survey of investigators who have been awarded grants
- Performance Metrics: Develop metrics to analyze resource usage patterns and effectiveness
- Stakeholder Engagement: Involve stakeholders in database development and seek their feedback for improvement
- Continuous Improvement: Continuously adapt and refine the database based on feedback and evolving needs

4. Outcomes

- Streamlined processes to identify SRs usage
- Improved accuracy in tracking SRs usage
- Data-driven resource allocation
- Since implementation of the database, we have conducted surveys on 26 recently awarded extramural grants

- Identified the SRs that made a significant impact in research support

5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Centralized tracking and monitoring of shared resource usage is critically important to the operations of the cancer center. We have implemented this database system to facilitate the evaluation of the use and impact of SRs. This system informs strategic decisions on investment needed to maintain and grow SR usage and impact on clinical research.

Going forward, we will expand the database's functionality by expanding analytics and reporting capabilities. Moreover, we will further expand the capabilities of this system by integration with other institutional databases to expand and enhance clinical research-related shared resource management processes.