

## **Elevating Health Care Through Leadership: The Vital Contribution of Research Nursing Team Leaders**

A. Haegler, C. Light, A. Joshi, B. Pothuri, D. Leis

*Laura & Isaac Perlmutter Cancer Center at NYU Langone Health*

### **1. Background**

As clinical research programs grow in staff and size, creating and maintaining sufficient management support can be challenging. The trial portfolio managed by the Clinical Trials Office (CTO) at Perlmutter Cancer Center (PCC) led to an increased need for clinical staffing ratios, which eventually outgrew and taxed managerial oversight capabilities. Initially CTO clinical leadership was expanded from one nurse manager position to two nurse manager positions. However, senior staff showed limited interest and positions remained unfilled for approximately seven months resulting in 33 percent to 100 percent vacancy in nurse management at any given time.

Following feedback from senior staff, a common theme emerged: a desire to continue clinical practice. As a result, a new position of Nurse Team Lead was created and added as an additional step in the research nurse career ladder.

### **2. Goals**

The Team Lead role is designed to allow senior oncology clinical research nurses to gain management experience while continuing clinical care by closely supporting staff and fostering professional growth and success within the organization.

### **3. Solutions and Methods**

The Team Lead role has been designed to keep patient care as a priority and on average provides approximately 75 percent clinical time for clinical trial patients. Approximately 25 percent of time is allotted for administrative and managerial responsibilities. The management related tasks include check-ins with other clinical research nurses, onboarding, vacation approvals, interviewing potential hires, disease management group check-ins, annual reviews, as well as attending management meetings and spearheading process improvement initiatives.

### **4. Outcomes**

In the last fiscal year, we have created and filled four Team Lead positions and nurse management positions remained 100 percent filled. By remaining engaged in direct patient care nurses stay attuned to evolving practices, sharpen proficiency in clinical skills, and lead by example for our team members. Regular involvement also fosters rapport and increases support with staff, enhances communication, and allows for firsthand observation of challenges and opportunities for improvement within the clinic. The commitment to ongoing clinical involvement not only strengthens nursing leadership effectiveness but also ensures the delivery of high-quality patient care. By providing tailored guidance, resources, and feedback the team leads empower staff members to excel in their roles and achieve their career aspirations.

### **5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions**

Despite the relatively recent roll out for the Team Lead role, the combined collaboration with upper leadership and maintained connection with clinical care has allowed for open dialogue between all staff members regarding new workflows and process improvements. This opportunity has allowed for shared learning experiences among all team members within our organizational chart. In the future we will

*Category: Training, Career Development, and Staff Retention - Work in progress*

evaluate clinical research nurse turn over to evaluate whether this new role has aided in mitigating nurse turn over. The Team Lead role allows for senior clinical research nurses to share their experience, provide a level of expertise, and support staff in their career advancement. We believe by investing in the development and support of our team, we strengthen the entire organization, leading to improved patient care outcomes and sustained success.