Poor physician and nurse engagement driving low patient recruitment

Less than 0.2% of patients seen annually are referred into clinical trials

- Physicians and nurses have a high familiarity and comfort level with clinical trials.
- The majority of physicians refer patients into clinical trials, but the annual number they refer is very low.
- Physicians and nurses cite limited information and time as primary reasons for not referring patients.
- Physicians in community-based practices are more likely to make referrals than those in hospital-based settings.
- MSNs and nurse practitioners make referrals at higher rates than registered nurses.
- Frequency and communication between investigative site staff, physicians, and nurses during and after the clinical trial are lacking.

Patient recruitment and retention are among the top causes of delay in clinical trials. Lack of familiarity and comfort level with referring patients into clinical trials on the part of physicians and nurses are often cited as major factors behind those delays. Also mentioned are health care provider concerns about losing patients once they are referred to a principal investigator. To better understand referral behavior, including why health care providers may not refer patients, Tufts CSDD surveyed 2,000 physicians and nurses, primarily in the United States and Europe. Key findings are summarized in this report.

Analysis of the survey results challenges the long-held notion that health care providers are a barrier to recruitment, and suggests opportunities to rethink and leverage the role of health care providers as facilitators and critical partners in engaging patients before and during clinical trial participation.