Leidos Health Case Study

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute

Concept, Development, and Implementation of the Mentor Program to Support Patient and Stakeholder Reviewers of Scientific Applications

CUSTOMER PROFILE

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) is authorized by Congress to conduct research to provide up-to-date evidence that may help patients and their healthcare providers make more informed decisions. Information gained from PCORI’s research affords individuals a greater understanding of current prevention, treatment, and care options, and the science that supports those options. PCORI’s mission is to help people make informed healthcare decisions and improve healthcare delivery and outcomes by producing and promoting high-integrity, evidence-based information that comes from research guided by patients, caregivers, and the broader healthcare community. This is closely tied to PCORI’s vision of helping to ensure that patients and the public have the information they need to make decisions that reflect their desired health outcomes.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Leidos Health was tasked with finding effective and efficient ways to support hundreds of new patient and stakeholder reviewers to successfully complete the merit review of PCORI applications.

To ensure that the voices of both stakeholders and patients were well represented on the merit-review panels, PCORI committed to including one patient and one “other stakeholder” for every two scientists on these panels—to ensure that 50 percent of the panel was comprised of patients and stakeholders. All panel members were tasked with reviewing applications in response to PCORI’s public funding announcements.

In its first full year of funding, PCORI received hundreds of applications, which required the service of more than 300 patient and stakeholder reviewers. The level of expertise among these reviewers varied dramatically; because PCORI had developed a unique set of criteria for the assessment process, even those with some prior experience were in need of extensive support and training.

OUR SOLUTION: A Patient and Stakeholder Mentor Program

Our Health Research Management Practice team was engaged to discover ways to efficiently and effectively support the PCORI patient and stakeholder reviewers. After an internal assessment, our team mapped out a Patient and Stakeholder Mentor Program. Our strategy: Leverage the expertise of a small group of highly committed, experienced patient and stakeholder reviewers to ensure that new patient and stakeholder reviewers succeed.

After starting with a holistic vision of success, Leidos Health then mapped out the appropriate steps to get there. Mentors were tasked with ensuring that the patient and stakeholder reviewers 1) completed written critiques that met PCORI’s high standards of quality,
2) participated effectively at the in-person merit review panel, and 3) had a positive experience working with PCORI.

To succeed, mentors received intensive in-person training that included an exploration of the art of mentoring and hands-on mentoring practice. Each was provided with a detailed scope of work, an online community network, and one-on-one training with review officers, and they were required to participate in regular teleconferences. Fully prepared and empowered, these mentors went on to work closely with all of the patient and stakeholder reviewers throughout the process. Meanwhile, the Leidos Health team developed timelines and milestones to identify, recruit, train, supervise, and evaluate mentors. Our adaptive design allowed us to continually improve the program throughout the launch.

As shown to the right, the mentor program is a dynamic system. It is a compelling, influential, and powerful circle where PCORI staff, participants, applicants, reviewers, and mentors, provide and receive information to learn and evolve.

**RESULTS**

The program has been enormously successful, and it continues to grow and thrive. During the first year alone, more than 50 PCORI mentors were recruited and trained. These mentors worked with more than 300 new patient and stakeholder reviewers who, in turn, evaluated hundreds of applications, wrote hundreds of critiques, and worked alongside scientists on merit review panels. Mentors have become an integral part of the organization, contributing as members of key committees and research teams, and as expert reviewers, advocates, and ambassadors.

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**To learn more about our expertise**

Please contact Martin or visit [http://www.leidos.com/health/life-sciences](http://www.leidos.com/health/life-sciences)

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The Health Research Management Practice team develops papers and publications to support the performance of our clients’ day-to-day operations as part of our core mission to accelerate the prevention, treatment, and cure of disease affecting our friends, our families, and our communities. We will publish Leidos Health Life Sciences products and those of other experts to support the biomedical research community and to provide insights for leaders to make sound business and policy decisions.