

Care Communications, Brown University & the National Lung Screening Trial (NLST)

Medical Record Abstraction

CHALLENGE:

Coordinate medical record abstraction for one of the largest clinical trials in the US. Brown University needs to complete a large scale effort to compile and analyze medical record data for thousands of study participants at healthcare providers across the United States. Each selected participant's medical data is abstracted and analyzed, many across multiple time intervals. "Outcomes intervals" commonly span time periods of six months to a year, and reviews of these records can be triggered by an initial clinical trial screening, annual follow-up screenings or more regular visits for medical care. Each outcomes interval report focuses on a single patient, and a patient's medical records could be reviewed for six or more reported intervals over the course of the eight-year study. Brown asked Care Communications, Inc. to build a highly specialized team to support this large scale abstraction effort.

SOLUTION:

Build a team of experts; design and implement abstraction and quality control processes. Despite the industry's well documented shortage of skilled professionals, Care Communications successfully assembled a team of medical record abstraction professionals that includes:

- o Nosologists
- o Certified Cancer Registrars
- o Record Procurement Experts
- o Research & Project Managers

Care Communications' team is working with Brown University and the study sponsor, the American College of Radiology Imaging Network (ACRIN), to:

- o Define where in the medical record clinical data elements can be found
- o Participate in the development of data collection guidelines, data entry, and training materials
- o Develop and document quality assurance activities
- o Procure study records under strict HIPAA regulations and provide training and assistance for study sites as needed
- o Create policies and procedures to cover all abstraction-related functions, including data abstraction, data entry, data quality assurance, and data security and confidentiality
- o Complete medical record abstraction functions onsite and remotely
- o Prepare detailed site reports on productivity, problem logs and corrective actions, amendments to policies and procedures, and weekly project status reporting

RESULT:

As of November 2008, Care Communications has completed more than 30,000 abstracts (representing 18,000 intervals) and will complete this medical data abstraction project on time and within federally funded budgets.

TESTIMONIAL:

"The procurement and abstraction of charts for this large study of screening for lung cancer is complex and challenging. Medical records from diverse sources, both inpatient and outpatient, are collected on thousands of study participants in more than twenty hospitals across the country. These records document health care utilization and clinical outcomes over a period of time spanning several years. Care Communications took on the challenge and brought it to fruition with remarkable resourcefulness, flexibility and professionalism."

- Constantine Gatsonis, PhD, Principle Investigator & Professor, Community Health, Brown University

About the National Lung Screening Trial (NLST):

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) and ACRIN are sponsoring a nationwide study of Americans 55 and older who have a history of long-time and/or heavy cigarette smoking. This National Lung Screening Trial (NLST) compares two ways of detecting lung cancer: standard chest x-ray and spiral CT (low radiation computed tomography). Currently, both chest x-rays and CT scans are used to detect lung cancer early. So far, however, neither chest x-rays nor CT scans have been shown to reduce a person's chance of dying from lung cancer. This study aims to help determine which test is superior. Brown University's Center for Statistical Sciences is leading and coordinating the abstraction effort.

For more information on Care Communications' medical record abstraction or its many other health information management services, visit carecommunications.com.

