

# Equity in cancer clinical trials

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# Disclosures

- I have no relevant financial disclosures.

# Outline

- Background
- Baseline data
- Goals
- Initiatives
- Questions

# Clinical trials

## CLINICAL RESEARCH



**Can we safely and effectively  
treat cancer in humans?**

Clinical scientists look at how safe a new treatment or test is, how well it works, and what side effects there are. Clinical trials can also compare tests or treatments.



Source: <https://cancer.wisc.edu/resources-for-the-community/>

# Clinical trials

- In cancer care, clinical trials have helped establish many of the cancer treatments used today.
- They are an important way to discover better future treatments.



# Why is diversity important?

- Cancer affects people of all backgrounds.
- Clinical trials should include people from diverse backgrounds to understand whether treatments are safe and effective for everyone.
- Everyone should have the opportunity to learn and participate in clinical trials.



Infographic source:  
Patel MA et al. JCO 2024.

# Diversity in clinical trials

- The National Institutes of Health (NIH) passed the Revitalization Act in 1993 to improve the diversity of clinical trials.
- It established guidelines to ensure that women and minority groups are included in research.
- Gaps still remain with differences in clinical trial participation by race, age, and sex.

Source:  
Freedman LS et al. Controlled  
Clinical Trials 1995.  
Duma N et al. JOP 2017.

# What can affect participation?

## Patient Factors

- Age
- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Income
- Insurance
- Access to health care
- Other health conditions
- Understanding health information
- Beliefs and preferences
- Social support
- Work and family responsibilities

Is the person eligible?

Are they offered a trial?

Do they enroll?

## Provider Factors

- Area of expertise
- Experience
- Knowledge of trials
- How trials are discussed
- Bias or assumptions
- Attitudes and beliefs

## Health System Factors

- Trial availability
- Transportation and parking
- Interpreter services
- Patient navigation
- Other support services

# UWCCC baseline data

# The University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center (UWCCC)



- UWCCC is a National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated comprehensive cancer center.
- More than 30,000 people are seen annually.

# Cancer Treatment Trial Enrollment

|                                  | White                | Underrepresented Minority (URM) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Community served (2024)          | 5,132,525<br>(86.1%) | 1,256,819<br>(21.1%)            |
| Cancer in our community (2022)   | 34,296<br>(92.1%)    | 3,489<br>(9.4%)                 |
| UWCCC patients (2024)            | 5,860<br>(94.3%)     | 465<br>(7.5%)                   |
|                                  |                      |                                 |
| Clinical trial enrollment (2023) | 412<br>(96.0%)       | 25<br>(5.8%)                    |
| Clinical trial enrollment (2024) | 396<br>(93.6%)       | 35<br>(8.3%)                    |
| Clinical trial enrollment (2025) | 377<br>(93.5%)       | 42<br>(10.4%)                   |

# Cancer Treatment Trial Enrollment

|                                  | Male                 | Female               |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Community served (2024)          | 2,985,442<br>(50.1%) | 2,975,533<br>(49.9%) |
| Cancer in our community (2022)   | 19,707<br>(52.9%)    | 17,538<br>(47.1%)    |
| UWCCC patients (2024)            | 3,082<br>(49.6%)     | 3,119<br>(50.2%)     |
|                                  |                      |                      |
| Clinical trial enrollment (2023) | 231<br>(53.8%)       | 198<br>(46.2%)       |
| Clinical trial enrollment (2024) | 216<br>(51.1%)       | 207<br>(48.9%)       |
| Clinical trial enrollment (2025) | 198<br>(49.1%)       | 205<br>(50.9%)       |

# Cancer Treatment Trial Enrollment

|                                  | 65+                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Community served (2024)          | 1,168,733<br>(19.6%) |
| Cancer in our community (2022)   | 22,920<br>(61.5%)    |
| UWCCC patients (2024)            | 3,287<br>(52.9%)     |
| Clinical trial enrollment (2023) | 203<br>(47.3%)       |
| Clinical trial enrollment (2024) | 207<br>(48.9%)       |
| Clinical trial enrollment (2025) | 193<br>(47.9%)       |

# UWCCC goals

# Goal 1: Increase outreach efforts

- Partner with UW Cancer Health Disparities Initiative (CHDI) to provide more information about cancer clinical trials to communities across Wisconsin.
- Work with marketing and community partners to create culturally relevant information about clinical trials.

# Goal 2: Reduce patient barriers

- Partner with UWCCC's Community Advocacy Boards (CABs) to better understand barriers to clinical trial participation.
- Connect patients with nurse navigators who can help address barriers and provide additional resources.
- Hire a bilingual patient navigator who can provide culturally-appropriate support and help patients learn about clinical trials.

# Goal 3: Educate faculty and staff

- Provide communication training for providers to support conversations about clinical trials.
- Use an implicit bias training program to promote more inclusive clinical trial conversations.

# Goal 4: Improve clinical trial protocols

- Develop best practices for designing clinical trials.
- Translate study materials when possible to make information easier to understand and accessible for more people.

# Goal 5: Track and monitor efforts

- Track clinical trial offers and participation over time.
- Set clear goals and measurable benchmarks to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement.

# Quality improvement project in collaboration with the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO)

# Team members

| Name / Title / Credentials                  | Role                        |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Kari Wisinski                               | Project Sponsor             |
| Monica Patel                                | Team Leader                 |
| Meredith Winkelhake                         | Core Team Member            |
| Amber Bradley                               | Core Team Member            |
| Sarah Stewart                               | Clinical Research Director  |
| Ashley Smith                                | Administrative support      |
| Cancer Health Disparities Initiative (CHDI) | Patient/outreach navigation |
| Community Advocacy Board                    | Community feedback          |
| Steve Power                                 | QTP Improvement Coach       |

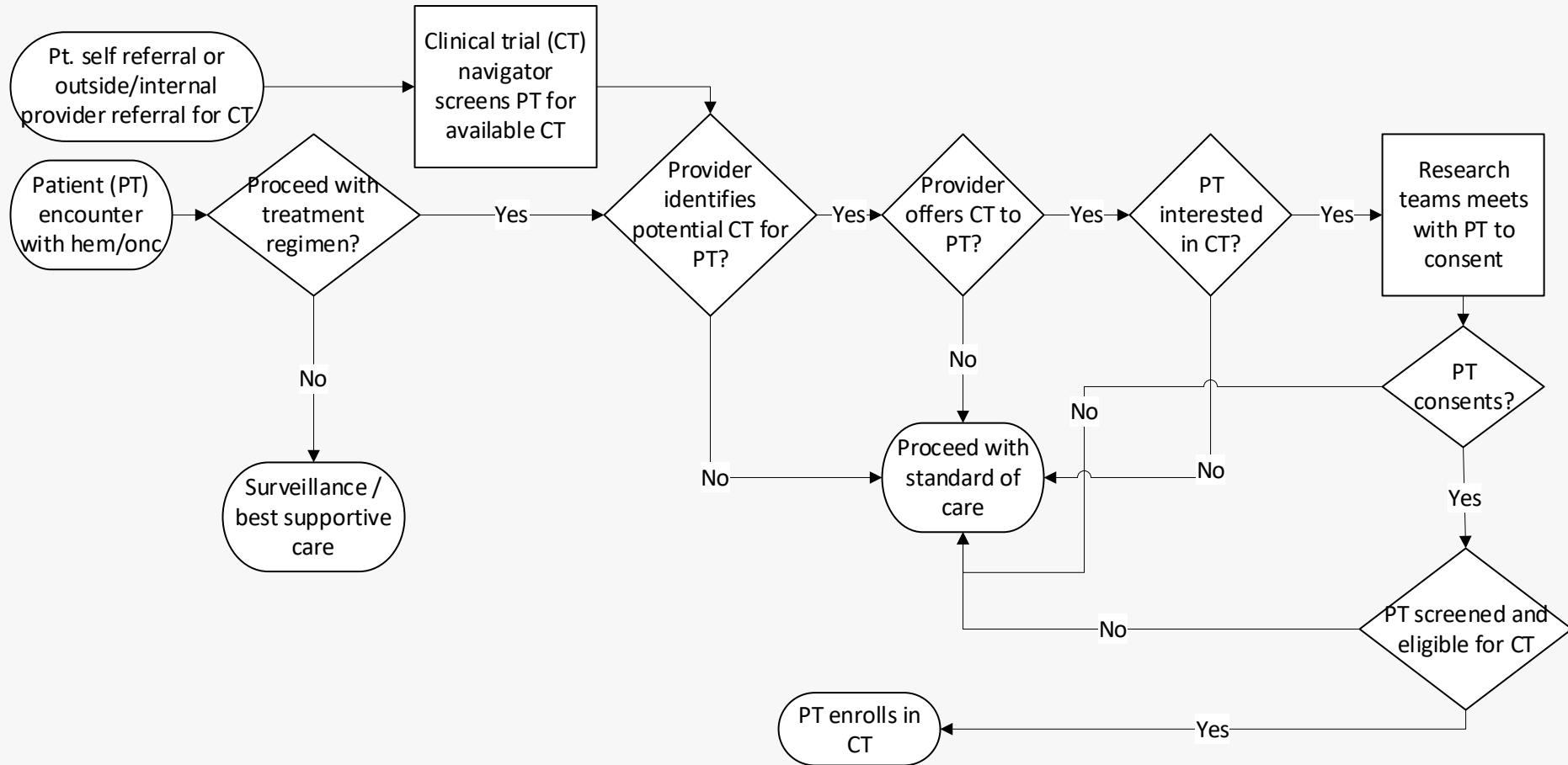
# Problem

- In 2023, 5.8% of people enrolled in oncology treatment clinical trials were from racial and ethnic minority groups.
- This was lower than the 9.6% of Wisconsin's cancer population represented by racial and ethnic minorities.

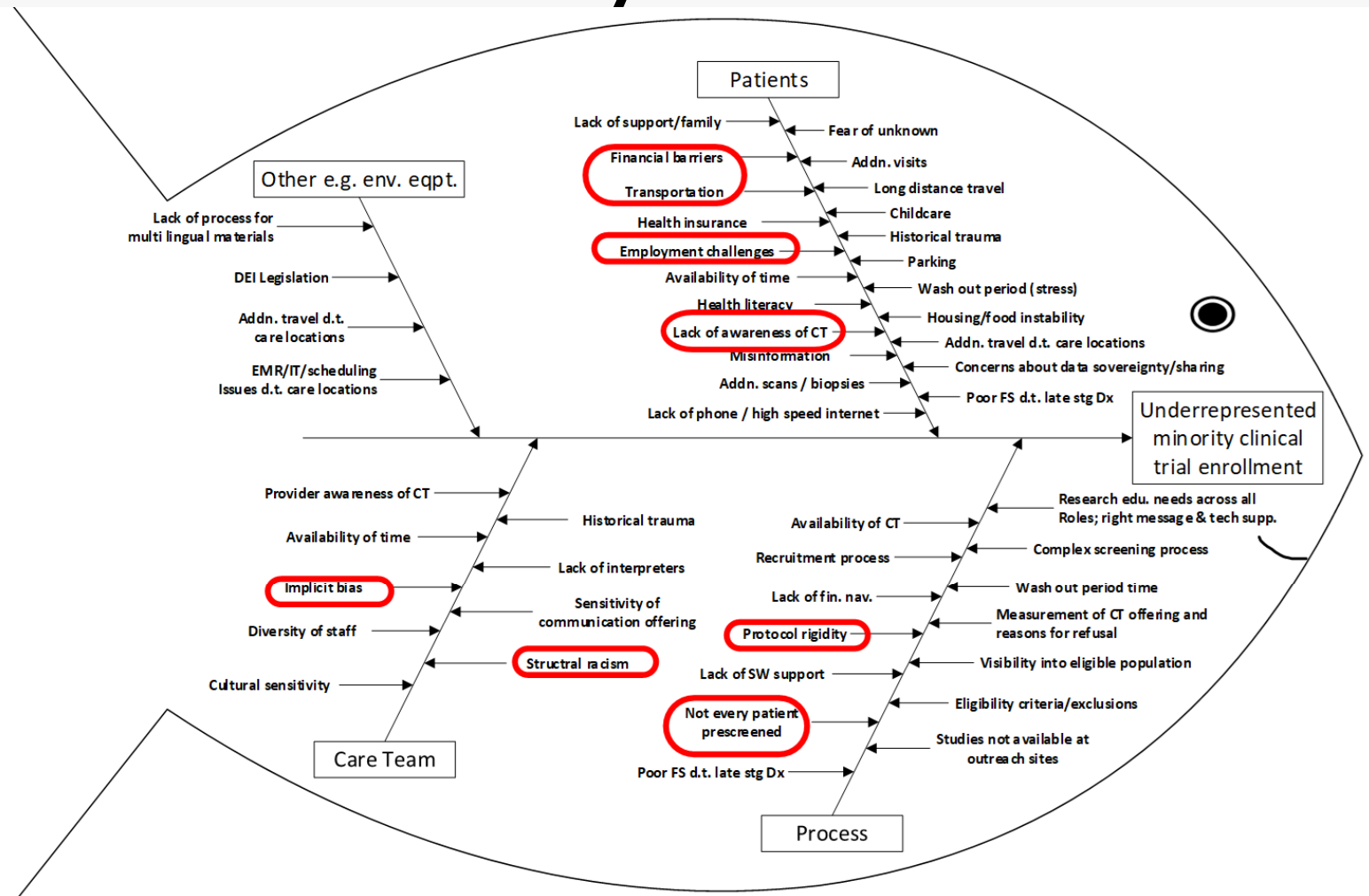
# Aim

- In 2023, 5.8% of people enrolled in oncology treatment clinical trials were from racial and ethnic minority groups.
- By 2026, UWCCC aims to increase this to 7.54% → a 30% percent increase in participation.

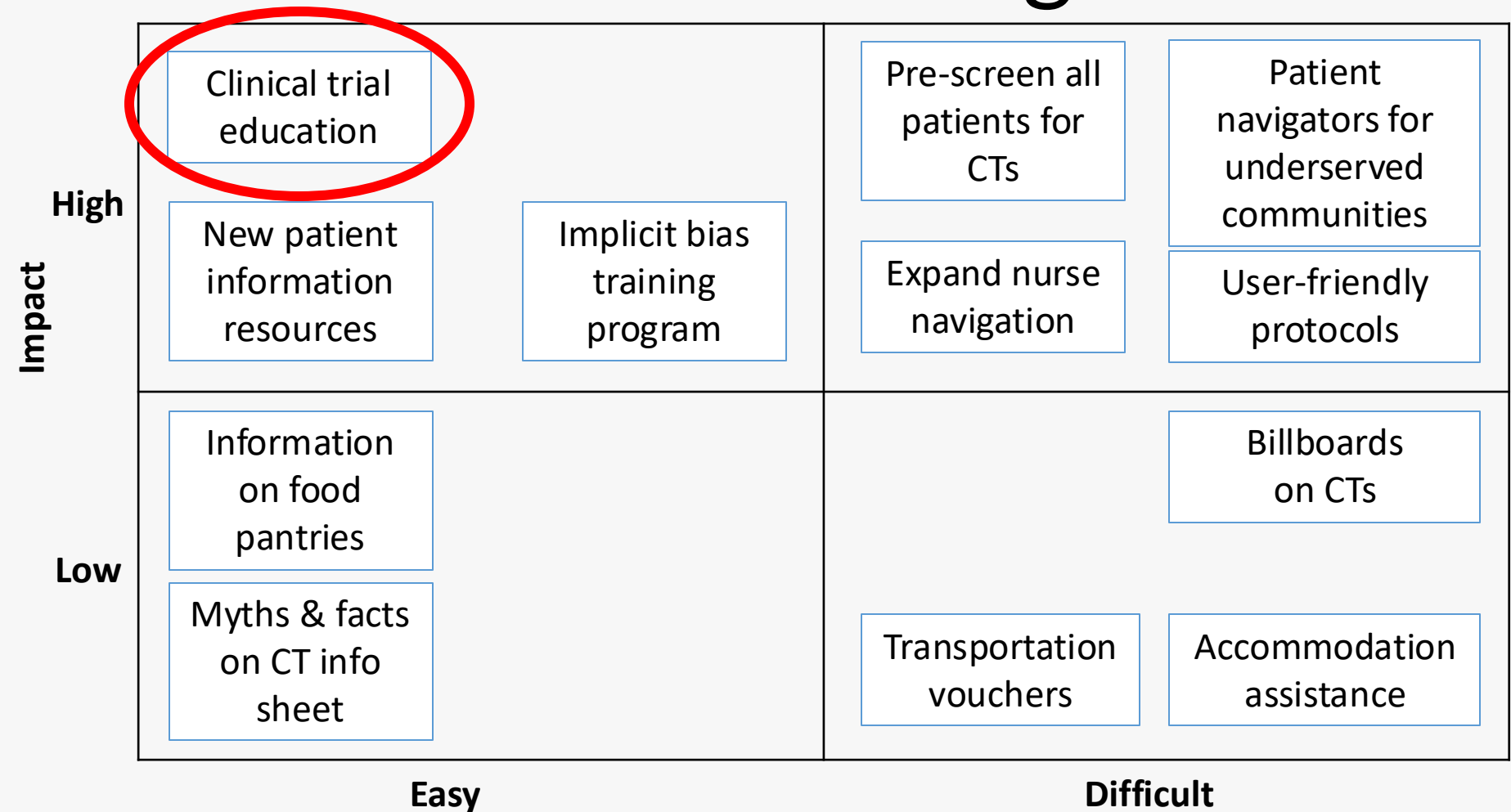
# Baseline Process



# Root cause analysis



# Prioritized List of Changes



# Clinical trial patient education

- 2024: Launched a nurse-led clinical trial education pilot in three multi-disciplinary gastrointestinal cancer clinics, reaching 49 new patients.



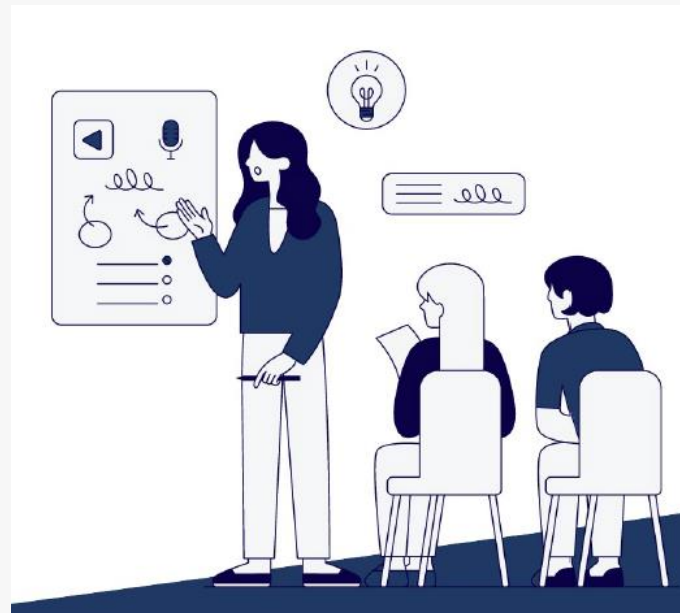
# Clinical trial patient education

- 2025: Created a video about clinical trials.
- This video is available on the UW Health website, which includes:
  - Information about clinical trials
  - Resources to help you learn more
  - Contact information for questions
- <http://www.uwhealth.org/cancertrials>



# Clinical trial patient education

- Building on the pilot, we identified a need for consistent clinical trial education at UW and across our community.



# Clinical trial patient education

- Partnered with the Cancer Health Disparities Initiative (CHDI) to engage the African American community in Wisconsin.
- In October 2025, 37 community members received information about cancer clinical trials through outreach.

# Clinical trial patient education

- In 2026, partnered with the Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin Promotores de Salud Program.
- Thus far, approximately 700 Latine community members have received education about clinical trials through home health parties.
- A brief pre-and post-survey is being used to assess changes in clinical trial understanding.

# Improve our data

- To address barriers, we need to better understand:
  - Who is offered a clinical trial?
  - Who is not offered a clinical trial?
  - What influences whether a provider offers a trial?
  - Why do some patients choose not to participate?

# Improve our data

- To understand the barriers, we implemented a form in our electronic medical record across UWCCC to:
  - Track when patients are offered clinical trials
  - Understand why patients choose not to participate

# Epic® SmartForm™

## CCC Recruitment Tracking Form - Testing Not Offered - Other

Instance Name: Testing Not Offered - Other

This form is to be used to for oncology research study recruitment. It is required to be completed for treatment intervention trials.

Date of contact: 4/10/2025

Study Offered: Yes No

|                |                        |                                           |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| If No, reason: | Known ineligibility    | Insufficient time                         |
|                | Provider forgot to ask | Provider did not know study was available |
|                | Unknown                | Other                                     |

If Other, provide detail:

## CCC Recruitment Tracking Form - Testing Offered

Instance Name: Testing Offered

This form is to be used to for oncology research study recruitment. It is required to be completed for treatment intervention trials.

Date of contact: 4/10/2025

Study Offered: Yes No

DOT:

☒ Biospecimen
 ☐ Brain
 ☐ Breast  
☐ Chemoprevention
 ☐ Early Phase
 ☐ GI  
☐ GU
 ☐ Gyn
 ☐ Leukemia  
☐ Lymphoma
 ☐ Melanoma
 ☐ Myeloma  
☐ Palliative
 ☐ Pediatric Onc
 ☐ Precision Medicine  
☐ Radiotherapy
 ☐ Surgery
 ☐ Thoracic  
☐ Other

Provider presenting study: ZZZEDWARDS, M MD [60006312]

Coordinator: ZZZEDWARDS, M RESEARCH NON-RN [MME097RSH]

Primary Diagnosis: Breast cancer (HCC) [172793]

Metastatic/Recurrent/Refractory: Yes No Unknown

Consent form given: Yes No

Primary Reason Consent Declined

Prefer other treatment/care/uninterested in tx/study

Pursue care locally

Time commitment/scheduling

Caregiving commitment (e.g., child, parent, spouse)

Transportation

Cost

Insurance

Other

No reason given

Secondary Reason Consent Declined

Prefer other treatment/care/uninterested in tx/study

Pursue care locally

Time commitment/scheduling

Caregiving commitment (e.g., child, parent, spouse)

Transportation

Cost

Insurance

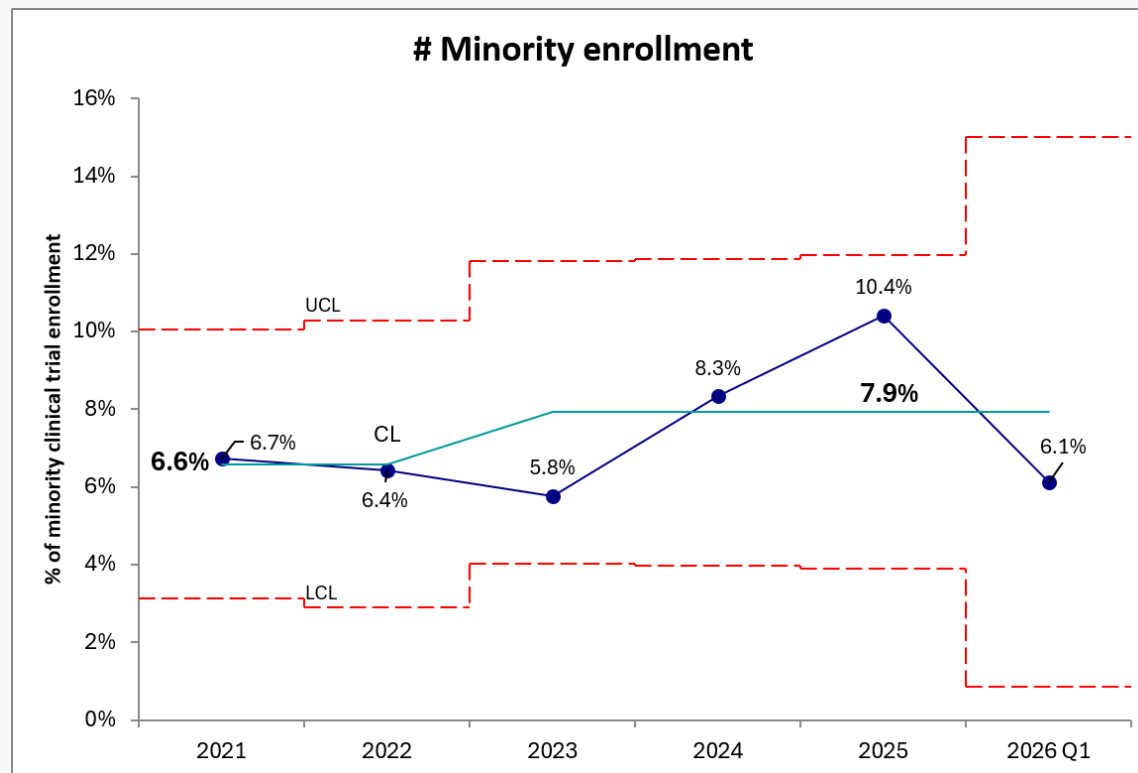
Other

No reason given

# Epic®

# Results

- Minority trial enrollment improved from 5.8% (2023) to 10.4% (2025).



# Conclusions

- A team-based approach that combined clinical trial education with better data collection was associated with increased participation among minority patients in clinical trials.

# Next steps

- Share our findings nationally.
- Continue and expand our community partnership with the Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin Promotores de Salud Program.
- Hire a bilingual patient navigator to help patients learn about and access clinical trials.
- Review Epic® SmartForm™ data to understand barriers and guide future efforts.

# Using a communication tool to support clinical trial participation

# Clinical trial conversations



## How doctors talk about clinical trials

### What did we study?

We asked 21 cancer doctors to talk to model patients about cancer treatments.

### What did we find?

- < 1 in 2 doctors recommended the patient join a clinical trial.
- Doctors spent less time talking about clinical trials with Black compared to White patients.



Doctors need support to talk about clinical trials more equitably.

Doctors could benefit from having support and structured discussions with patients to communicate clinical trial information.

Source:  
Patel MA et al. JCO 2024.  
Patel MA et al. Supportive  
Care in Cancer 2025.

# A tool to support treatment conversations



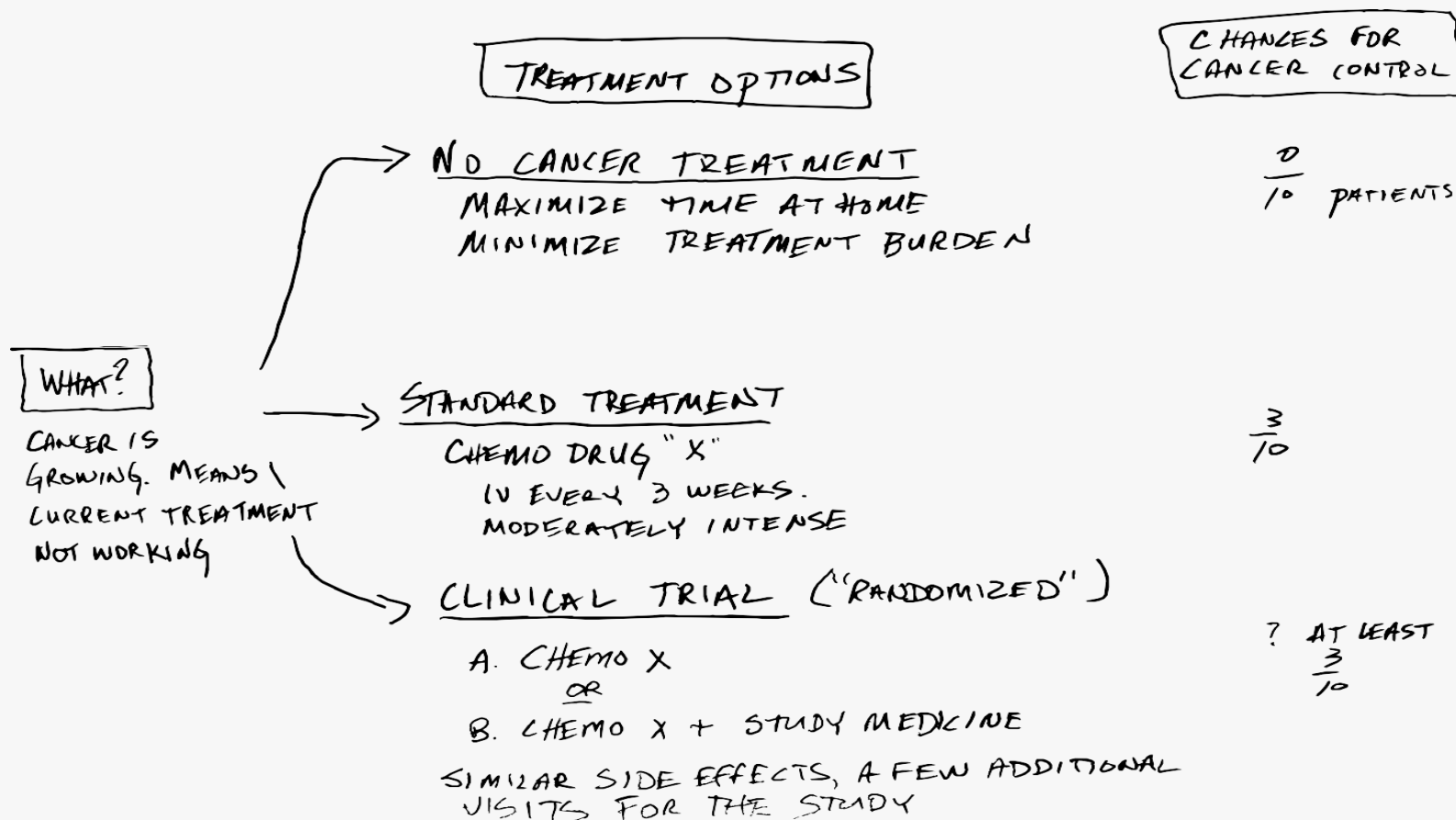
- TrialTalk™ is an evidence-based communication tool developed by my mentor, Dr. Toby Campbell.
- Combines a conversation with a simple diagram to explain treatment options
- Helps patients compare treatment options, including expected benefits, side effects, and effectiveness.

Infographic source:  
<https://www.uwhealth.org/news/decision-making-tool-aims-to-boost-clinical-trial-awareness>



**Carbone Cancer Center**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

# Introducing the TrialTalk™ Tool



# Introducing the TrialTalk™ Tool

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

## CHANCES FOR CANCER CONTROL

### NO CANCER TREATMENT

MAXIMIZE TIME AT HOME  
MINIMIZE TREATMENT BURDEN

$\frac{0}{10}$  PATIENTS

### WHAT?

CANCER IS  
GROWING. MEANS  
CURRENT TREATMENT  
NOT WORKING

### STANDARD TREATMENT

CHEMO DRUG "X"  
IV EVERY 3 WEEKS.  
MODERATELY INTENSE

$\frac{3}{10}$

### CLINICAL TRIAL

NONE RIGHT NOW. MAYBE  
IN THE FUTURE.

# TrialTalk™ helps support conversations

- 27 oncologists participated in a 2-hour training on how to use TrialTalk™
- Providers found the tool easy to use
- The tool helped support shared decision-making
- More patients chose to consent to a clinical trial after receiving a consultation where TrialTalk™ was used

Source: Anandan A et al. JPSM 2020.

# What we hope TrialTalk™ will achieve

- Our goal with training providers to use the TrialTalk™ tool is that this may:
  - Increase clinical trial participation for all patients
  - Build trust between patients and providers
  - Improve communication and patient's understanding of their treatment options.
  - Ensure that providers mention clinical trials with all patients.

# Summary

- Our team is taking a comprehensive approach to address patient-, provider-, and system-level barriers to clinical trial participation.
- Education, communication, navigation, and community partnerships are helping create more equitable participation.
- Sustained efforts are critical to maintaining progress.
- The Epic® SmartForm™ provides the data needed to monitor our efforts and guide future interventions.

Thank you.  
Questions? Feedback?