



NARAP Community Hospitals

Research Associates are pre-health professional students who volunteer one 4-hour shift per week in the emergency department to serve as data collectors facilitating clinical research and quality improvement projects.

Why should a community hospital emergency department without academic/research activities want to have a Research Associates Program?

- 1. Research Associates come at no cost to the institution for their labor.**
Where else could you get such large numbers of highly educated, motivated workers to serve four-hour shifts per week for the experience and a letter of recommendation?
- 2. Studies, such as the National Alliance of Research Associate Programs (NARAP) multi-center tobacco cessation study, with a focus on facilitating primary care screening and prevention among patients and visitors in the emergency department are**
 - a. good public health
 - b. good for patient satisfaction
 - c. good public relations/community outreach
- 3. Quality Improvement studies with high volume/short time frame, direct observational, prospective data.**
- e.g., Serving Patients Efficiently in the Emergency Department (SPEED) evaluated decision times from bringing an EP forward to triage: 1659 subjects in 9 weeks.
- 4. Recruitment of ED personnel for whom the potential for research might be a positive element in their decision-making to join the staff at a given hospital.**
- 5. The Affordable Care Act/IRS Notice 2010-39 (<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/n-10-39.pdf>) adds four additional requirements on hospitals in order to maintain their 501c3 tax exempt status and avoid a \$50,000 excise tax. Among them is a mandate for hospitals to conduct a “community health needs assessments (CHNA)” every three years with an implementation addressing the needs found. The IRS thinks NARAP’s tobacco cessation study and subsequent studies based on this model would be applicable.**

All this for no cost to the institution, except being part of a NARAP multi-center study and supporting NARAP’s grant applications.

Chief RAs, college graduates taking a year between college and health professional school, do the “grunt work” of the program

- e.g., recruiting, scheduling, on-line personnel issues, website/external communication and data management
- volunteer about 20-hours per week

A physician supervises their work, assigns them tasks, makes sure things are done, and writes their letters of evaluation.