



The National Alliance  
of Research Associates Programs

## 2017 Affiliate Growth Plans

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NARAP is a medical research company with a single unique factor – the fact that the Research Associates (RAs) engage directly, face-to-face, with every potential research subject in a clinical setting within Affiliate hospitals. This face-to-face engagement ensure that the data collected is of the highest quality, which is a major strength of NARAP.

We facilitate clinical research and bring together the facets needed to do research on a vast scale, nationally, with multi-center studies over very short time frames. We do this by allowing pre-health professional students to volunteer one four-hour shift per week as data collectors, for clinical studies in the emergency department.

**Our primary health care screening studies have enrolled more than 23,700 participants thus far.**

Our current focus is on primary healthcare screening and prevention. Our goal is to give value added for the public health from the inevitable wait times in emergency visits by utilizing RAs and to measure its effect through clinical research. The unique ability NARAP offers to facilitate enrollment of extremely large numbers, in incredibly short time frames, benefits the research project in allowing for a very low "n" (degree of error).

NARAP brings these numbers together to produce a fundamental change in how clinical research is conducted, how screening and prevention is facilitated and how future health professionals discern, qualify and are developed.

The Research Associates (RA) Program is an effective cohort with a long-term vision of affecting change in small but critical aspects of the healthcare system. At the present time, the program continues to grow, with the intent of doubling the number of Affiliate hospitals in 2017, combined with the premise of conducting studies beyond the environment of the Emergency Department (ED). NARAP and affiliates have enrolled more than 140,000 subjects in clinical research. A partial list of studies includes tobacco cessation, domestic violence, firearms injury, cardiovascular risk assessment, dental check-ups, antibiotics in children, cervical cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, and colon-rectal cancer.

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Our Research Associates program is located at the ED of hospitals around the country enter hosts medical students, undergraduates, graduate students, and post-graduate students interested in medical careers to participate in data collection for academic research projects. As RAs students are given the opportunity to learn basic methodologies in clinical research, interact with patients, and observe the practice of emergency medicine. RAs participate daily in the innovation of medical practice and are the volunteer student data collectors for our program. They are pre-health professional students that volunteer one 4-hour shift a week. They go through an intensive training program and spend four hours a week interviewing patients as a part of research facilitation.

There are two ranks of Research Associates: Line RAs and Chief RAs. Line RAs are the data collectors serving shifts in the emergency department. Chief RAs are the middle managers of the Programs, supervising the day-to-day operations and participating in the production of all phases of the research.

This benefits the RAs as it provides pre-health professionals exposure to clinical research utilizing hands-on patient interaction. The data collectors are evaluated at progressive points in the semester, and in turn, these evaluation opportunities benefit their medical school admission process.

The RA Program began with a group of ten undergraduate and medical students who were recruited to help collect data for a variety of studies. Many past participants have cited the program as a pivotal experience when applying to medical school and EM residency programs.

In the present day, the need for our research methodologies has been growing around the country. The clinical trial landscape is witnessing an increase in Phase III trials that average more than 3,500 patients. As more of these large trials continue to emerge, many contract research organizations and sponsors are struggling to recruit qualified clinical research associates to support the influx of work.

Lack of experienced talent represents one of the main challenges facing the market, impacting sponsors and CROs alike with increased costs and extended timelines. Yet the urgent need for qualified clinical researchers will continue given that the demand in the field is projected to grow by 36.4% from 2012 to 2022 in the US, an issue also reflected worldwide.

The gap in the marketplace is partially due to the pre-med years in a practitioner's career. Exposure to clinical research at a young age as it establishes a path through tailored interactive exposure, hands-on experience and an ongoing mentoring program. RAs receive a solid foundation that lays the groundwork for a variety of rewarding career paths.

Another catalyst for growth at NARAP is the desire to expand beyond the ED into a myriad of new studies in the hospital environment. Our ability to quickly register large cohorts enables us to go beyond the ED very easily.

Bearing in mind the pressing need for research in various disciplines and the need to educate pre-med and pre-bac students, NARAP intends to double its Affiliate (hospital-based) program in 2017 from 15 to 30. To support this growth, many changes are occurring. In any clinical trial, data integrity at rest and in motion is a key

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element. As dedicated research professionals who are knowledgeable about the science of observation monitoring and its collaborative nature, NARAP is the first line of defense. Therefore, we are working on Clinical Trial Management System (CTMS), Electronic Trial Master Files (eTMS) and Electronic Data Capture (EDC) solutions reflective of industry need.

We are also offering a data service offering to our Affiliates including an education program that will help Affiliates to understand what their data needs are and how data services should no longer be thought of as data analytics alone. Clinicians are generally not trained to work with data in a meaningful way, they are trained to look at data and present it through a particular lens, and as data trends continue to grow they will need to be better equipped to deal with data. NARAP's data services offerings will develop a program for the RAs to help bring our "graduates" across to the new frontier in healthcare. Data-driven healthcare is here and it's only going to get more complicated. NARAP has a great opportunity to assist RAs in their careers, and to assist their future patients by allowing data to play a bigger role in the decision flow of medicine. 70% of all treatment decisions go back to a laboratory test result, yet laboratory reports often just give a simple result with no interpretation of that data (NARAP will not be providing data interpretations, though some Pathology departments have begun to do this, and research has shown this to be beneficial). This is a huge opportunity to help clinicians and their patients, as an example of what data can do. Innovations are often met with skepticism and later adopted, this is true for data trends in healthcare as well, and our RAs can be uniquely positioned to assist their future employers with adapting to these trends.

NARAP will work with Affiliates to ensure that the structure of study data division is properly implemented, and as the NARAP team begins to identify outside repositories plans should be created around importing data into a separate part of NARAP systems, so as to not disturb the internal data. External and internal data will be combined to create better mapping and reporting opportunities, but these data streams will also be enabled to exist separately.

To support all aspects of research, and to specifically double our Affiliate program, a strong, nationwide education platform is needed. NARAP has developed a Certification-based online program, run in an asynchronous format for three weeks. We are also pleased to report that we are currently working with four Universities in the Northeast on the premise of a NARAP training curriculum being available as a catalogued 3-credit course for pre-med and pre-bac students in conjunction with their volunteerism at an Affiliate hospital.

With deep experience and a reputation for quality expertise in Emergency Departments across the nation, NARAP understands the essential role of skilled RAs in successful studies. We look forward to doubling our Affiliate with innovative individuals committed to ongoing quality in clinical research And RAs can expect that we'll reward their efforts from the moment they walk in the door.

As we grow this collaborative, talent-building process, we will continue to seek feedback from Affiliates on how satisfied they are with the coursework knowledge-base and the data services offering.