

Epic seeks to improve clinical trial access by tightening data access, communication among participants

Article

The news: Epic launched a new program to improve clinical trial matchmaking in underserved populations, dubbed **Life Sciences**.

- Life Sciences matches healthcare providers, pharmaceutical companies, and medical device manufacturers to potential clinical trials.
- It expands on clinical trial matching in Epic's **MyChart** to connect the entire Epic provider network with study sponsors.
- Data insights let providers know when patients qualify for clinical trials, and predictive models help providers decide when to administer therapy.

Epic's **Cosmos** database of more than 160 million patient electronic health records (EHRs) provides customized data queries to help healthcare providers make recommendations on which patients should participate in trials. "We use Cosmos to run trial feasibility and matchmaking queries, which provider organizations can then re-run on their databases, identify their possible patient participants, and choose how to engage with them for potential studies," **Alan Hutchison**, vice president at Epic, told Insider Intelligence. "All of this is possible through Epic."

The problem: Disconnected systems create inefficiencies such as duplication efforts that lead to patients and providers being unable to participate in trials. To improve clinical participation in trials and accelerate drug development, the healthcare industry needs a stronger link to clinical data. Epic is a "single codebase that connects clinicians, patients, payers, and specialty diagnostics labs—and eventually industry sponsors—throughout the healthcare ecosystem," Hutchison said.

Trendspotting: Increasing participation in clinical trials will be key considering the low numbers of people that participate and the lack of diversity in trials.

- Only **3%** of US physicians and patients participate in clinical trial research altogether, per the FDA.
- And over the last 15 years, **42%** of US cancer trial cohorts lacked African American patients, and **48%** had no Hispanic American patients, per research from clinical trial database Phesi.

Epic isn't the only EHR company to be addressing clinical trial access.

- Cerner has a **Learning Health Network (LHN)** database, in which 85 diverse US health systems share data on de-identified patients. It's working with **Elligo Health Research** and

biotech company **Freenome** to [increase](#) access to clinical trials.

Pharma companies are also working on boosting clinical trial participation.

- **Walmart** [filed](#) trademark patents for a clinical trial business on August 11. With its large footprint of stores, it's suited to make clinical trials more diverse.
- **Walgreens** [launched](#) a clinical trial business in June with the aim to increase diverse communities' access and retention in sponsor-led drug development research.
- **CVS Health** introduced Clinical Trial Services in May 2021 to tackle low patient enrollment, diversity, and engagement using analytics. It partnered with Medable to expand engagement for patients in clinical trials at the pharma giant's **MinuteClinic** locations.

The big takeaway: Data-driven programs like Epic Life Sciences can build more representation into clinical trials and increase coordination among patients, providers, and trial sponsors.

Leading Concerns for Technology Adoption at Clinical Trial Study Sites According to US Clinical Operations Professionals*, Dec 2020

% of respondents



Note: n=75; *respondents are part of clinical research organizations, academic medical centers, independent sites, pharma, hospital/health systems, biotech, cancer centers, site networks, medical devices, and other
Source: Florence, "Clinical Trial Site Technology: 2021 State of the Industry Report," Jan 5, 2021

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