Embedded Clinical Research and Innovation Unit (ECRI)

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ECRI Research Recruitment and Study Support Services

Embedded Clinical Research and Innovation (ECRI) provides a comprehensive suite of services tailored to meet the evolving needs of academic research endeavors. From initial study development to ongoing operational support, we offer flexible solutions designed to enhance the success of your projects. Our team is dedicated to collaborating closely with researchers to deliver personalized services that optimize efficiency and outcomes.

One of our standout offerings is our expertise in research recruitment utilizing CareConnect tools. We work closely with Research CareConnect team to customize every tool using UCLA's EHR system to seamlessly identify your study cohort using discrete data fields that meet your study's criteria. Researchers consistently report enhanced recruitment success and cost savings compared to traditional methods, as our tools minimize reliance on coordinator time and resources.

Explore our customizable range of services below and discover how ECRI can help with your research initiatives.

Partner with us to transform your ideas into impactful achievements together!

For any ECRI research recruitment and other study service area(s) questions you can contact us at ECRIrequest@mednet.ucla.edu.

To inquire about ECRI recruitment services **click here** to submit a Qualtrics request form and our team will reach out with next steps. Or scan QR code:

To learn more on all the services ECRI offers please click from the options below:

- Study Development and Support
- Recruitment Services
- Research Recruitment Registries
- REDCap Support

Last updated: 11 Jun 2024

Study Development and Study Support

From protocol inception to IRB consultation and compliance management, we offer comprehensive support to shape robust study frameworks. Our expertise spans workflow design for recruitment and the creation of compelling communication materials to engage participants effectively.

Our suite of services encompasses study coordination, whether on-site or online, alongside meticulous recruitment coordination. We provide on-site assistance, routine metrics and reporting, and optimization of recruitment procedures, supplemented by tailored staff training to ensure seamless study execution.

ECRI is proud to be the managing team over patient related and regulatory operations for the following long-lasting projects and initiatives:

- Universal Consent for Biological Samples
- Athena Breast Health Network
- Wisdom Study
- Depression Grand Challenge
- Institute for Precision Health/ATLAS
- Center for Smart Health

If you are interested to collaborate with these programs, email us at ECRI@mednet.ucla.edu to schedule a discussion around the available opportunities.

Last updated: 4 Jun 2024

Recruitment Services

ECRI Research Recruitment Services in conjunction with our partners at Research CareConnect offer services to the UCLA Research community that include using CareConnect recruitment tools and other innovational platforms to help reach your study recruitment goals. This initiative represents a significant milestone in our ongoing mission to enhance the capabilities and effectiveness of research recruitment services at UCLA. Please use link below for project requests. The link also offers comprehensive information on available tools and updated CareConnect build rates. Please note that for Robocall services or utilization of our recruitment registries, a consultation is required to ensure accurate estimates of our support efforts.

Our services include:

- MyChart recruitment
- Workbench reports
- Real-time alerts/notifications
- Automated robo-calls
- Emails and text messages

To place a request with our team visit: https://uclahs.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8G7lHnOQEbYONaS

Contact us at: ECRIrequest@mednet.ucla.edu

Explore Frequently Asked Questions

General Information on CareConnect Research Recruitment Tools

What are CareConnect research recruitment tools?

Tools available to UCLA's Epic to provide research recruitment assistance that streamlines and enhances the process of identifying, recruiting, and managing participants for clinical studies. These tools are integrated within the Epic EHR system, leveraging existing patient data and clinical workflows.

What are the available CareConnect research recruitment tools?

Please reference this document for more detailed information:
https://uclahs.az1.qualtrics.com/CP/File.php?F=F_0eK27crRYBm5v7M

MyChart Messages: Send secure messages directly to patients' MyChart accounts, inviting them to participate in studies. This tool is efficient for reaching large candidate populations.

Reporting Workbench Report: Generate a list of patients within CareConnect to identify patients who qualify for a study based on provided eligibility criteria.

Real-Time Notification: Receive email, page, or InBasket messages when patients meet eligibility criteria for a study, suitable for time-sensitive enrollments or interventions.

Provider-Facing BPA: Display on-screen alerts to clinicians during clinic visits, notifying them of patient eligibility for research studies.

What are the benefits of using CareConnect Research Recruitment tools?

- **Integration**: Seamless integration with EHR ensures that all relevant patient data is easily accessible and current.
- **Efficiency**: Automates many aspects of the recruitment process, saving time and resources.
- **Accuracy**: Reduces errors and enhances the precision of patient selection through automated matching and comprehensive data analysis.
- **Engagement**: Improves patient engagement through direct communication channels like MyChart.
- **Compliance**: Ensures that recruitment processes comply with regulatory requirements by using secure and validated systems.

Overall, Epic's research recruitment tools provide significant advantages in terms of efficiency, accuracy, and patient engagement, ultimately facilitating more effective and streamlined clinical research efforts.

Who can send out MyChart recruitment messages?

For research recruitment ECRI is the only dedicated team that is approved by IRB to send out MyChart blasts. This is required to ensure that ethical guidelines are followed when contacting potential participants for research recruitment. To utilize MyChart for research recruitment, approval must be received by the CareConnect Research Recruitment Committee.

How many UCLA patients are active on MyChart?

82% of our 4.8 million patients are active on MyChart.

My study has more than one cohort, can I use these tools for both populations?

Yes, we can accommodate more than one cohort for an additional fee.

What response rate can I expect with using MyChart standard Research Recruitment tool?

Up to 5% of patients contacted will enroll.

What response rate can I expect with using MyChart direct InBasket messaging?

Up to 10% of patients contacted will enroll.

For my real-time alert, can I receive a page while my coordinator receives an email?

Yes, we can configure the messages to come to each user in any of the three formats (page, email, CareConnect InBasket message).

Who can use CareConnect Research Recruitment tools?

CareConnect research recruitment tools are available for use by UCLA researchers conducting studies involving UCLA patients. These tools cannot be used for non-UCLA patients or healthy cohorts. If a study team is a part of a multi-site study, as long as a Principal Investigator (PI) is affiliated with UCLA Health, the study team can utilize CareConnect research recruitment tools.

What criteria can be used for recruitment?

The common search criteria include demographic factors such as age, race/ethnicity, language, and marital status, as well as diagnosis codes (ICD-9 & ICD-10), visit types, encounter departments, admission status, lab result values, and medications. However, it's important to note that the tools cannot search through free text documentation or scanned documents.

What if the Principal Investigator (PI) or study contact changes?

Contact ECRI right away to assure that services are not canceled at ECRIRequest@mednet.ucla.edu

Sponsor Based Studies

How do I add ECRI recruitment services to a sponsor agreement?

Make sure to add ECRI recruitment services to your contract with the sponsor. This involves including the recruitment details as part of the agreement language and budget to reflect our services. Please consult with our team before you provide budget details to the sponsor. *We are working to add ECRI recruitment services to the budget templates as an electable service budget item in the near future.*

What if I already have an executed contract and need to add the recruitment tools?

Option 1: Update the Existing Agreement

You can add ECRI recruitment services to your current contract with the sponsor. This involves updating the agreement language and budget to reflect our services. Once revised, the contract goes through your usual internal processing steps. The turnaround time typically 1-2 weeks, depending on how quickly the forms are signed and assuming no financial conflict delays the process. ECRI can provide more detailed guidance on this as part of your feasibility consultation.

Option 2:

You can opt to cover the recruitment services outside of the Sponsor agreement by using your department's unrestricted funds. This approach avoids contract changes altogether, it has been used successfully by other study teams and is entirely acceptable.

Can I use any of the tools for Sponsor based studies?

This is dependent on the risk of the study. If your study is a trial intervention high risk study MyChart cannot be used. Make sure you connect with ECRI for MyChart tool for Cohort identification. Through our feasibility assessment we can let you know if your request is feasible from a technical perspective and which tool would be best suited for your recruitment needs.

Approval Process, Timeline, and Fees

What is the process to get approval for using CareConnect research recruitment tools?

1. Submitting a Qualtrics form.
2. A feasibility consultation with ECRI.
3. Submitting for IRB approval.
4. ECRI presents on behalf of the project to get approval from the CareConnect Research Recruitment Committee.
5. Signing a Statement of Work (SOW) with ECRI.
6. Submitting a ticket for tool building.
7. Completing a Data Use Agreement if needed.
8. A tool handoff meeting with the CareConnect analyst.

If interested in using CareConnect research recruitment tools, fill out:
https://uclahs.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8G7lHnOQEbYONaS

Are there fees associated with using CareConnect research recruitment tools?

Yes, there are estimated fees associated with tool requests. Each standard tool request is an estimated one-time fee of $2,500, while custom/advanced builds can increase up to $5,000 per tool. Additionally, there's a one-time project management setup fee of $440. For MyChart tools, there's a $92 fee per message blast. *For MyChart Non-Standard Messaging tool only, there is an additional $92 per month fee for managing patient inquiries.*

How do I estimate cost for MyChart or Research Registry bulk messaging?

Scenario: A study is looking to recruit participants and do not have any restrictions on how many participants can be processed per week/month. They want 500 messages to go out per blast. Given a 2% enrollment rate they will require 20 blasts to meet their recruitment goal. Each blast is $92.

- Recruitment Goal: 200 participants
- Enrollment Rate: 2%
- Blasts Required: 20
- Total Cost: $1,840

At what point in the process will the team be billed?

After the tool is built out, the ECRI team will send out an invoice. Study team will need to provide contact information for their finance manager for payment processing.

What is Needed from Study Teams

What do we need from you to process your request?

Submit an intake form prior to the feasibility consultation:
https://uclahs.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8G7lHnOQEbYONaS

You will be prompted to attach your study protocol, study IRB application (if approved at time of submission), and study Informed Consent Form as well as other basic study information such as inclusion/exclusion criteria, expected recruitment dates, challenges recruitment, etc.

How do you prepare for the feasibility consultation with ECRI?

Review the information sent out via email prior to the consultation and discuss which tool might be the best fit for your needs.

Does my study team need CareConnect access to use these tools?

Ideally, at least one person on the study team would have CareConnect access. However, ECRI can forward interested messages from the MyChart Recruitment Messaging tool, but fees may be associated. CareConnect access is required to use Reporting Workbench Report, Real-Time Notifications, and Provider-Facing BPA tools.

How would I get CareConnect access?

You must be affiliated with UCLA Health to receive CareConnect access. Complete the required live trainings, submit an access request form, and get sign off from a PI and manager.

Changes/Modifications Once Tools are Built

How can changes be requested for already built-out tools?

If changes or modifications are required for a built-out tool, the team needs to submit a Change Request Form. Depending on the request, associated fees may apply. The ECRI team will review the request and notify the study team of any costs involved. Please see the following link to find the Change Request Form:

https://uclahs.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eQagl4PNlEhcB9Q

What if there are staff changes and access to tools need to be updated?

If there are other staff changes, please ensure that new staff members are IRB-approved and submit a Change Request Form here: https://uclahs.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eQagl4PNlEhcB9Q

Committees Involved

What is the ECRI team?

Embedded Clinical Research and Innovation (ECRI) Unit (CTSI) manages intake process for all requests, feasibility review, point of contact for research teams for all Research Recruitment build requests in CareConnect. Designated group to send out MyChart research recruitment bulk messaging blasts.

What is the CareConnect Research Recruitment committee?

The committee is responsible for reviewing and approving requests to use CareConnect Research Recruitment tools, ensuring that all requests comply with IRB guidelines and are feasible with the CareConnect Research team.

What is the CareConnect Research team?

Works with ECRI and study teams to build each customized study specific recruitment tool so that it meets inclusion and exclusion criteria, RCC test/validates tool and pushes it to production.

Other General Terms

What is CareConnect?

CareConnect is UCLA's electronic health record (EHR) program, that is also known as Epic. The system offers several tools for research recruitment that utilize the EHR data stored here.

What is a DUA?

DUA: Data Use Agreement. A Data Use Agreement (DUA) is a legally binding contract that outlines the terms and conditions under which data can be accessed, used, and shared. It governs the use of data that may contain sensitive or confidential information, such as personal health information (PHI) or proprietary research data. It is necessary for CC tools that utilize electronic health record (EHR) data.

What is an SOW?

SOW: Statement of Work. A Statement of Work is a signed agreement to outline scope, deliverables, and resources needed for a project. Typically, the ECRI team will generate an SOW document for both parties to sign prior to the build of the tool, but after IRB approval of the tool.

What are smart data fields?

Smart data fields in Epic/CareConnect are structured data elements that capture key clinical information, such as vital signs, medications, allergies, and lab results. They integrate seamlessly within the EHR, supporting real-time clinical decision-making, reporting, and data analysis. They do not capture free-text clinician notes nor scanned documents.

For any further inquiries or assistance, please contact the ECRI team at ECRIRequest@mednet.ucla.edu.

Last updated: 25 Nov 2025

Research Recruitment Registries

ECRI manages a diverse portfolio of research recruitment registries, meticulously curated to align with specific diseases or health conditions. Collaborating with UCLA Marketing, we've achieved remarkable success in advertising these registries. Our patients, students and broader studies show that engaging patients from our recruitment registries yields recruitment rates 4-6 times higher than other remote methods. Our services extend to developing new registries, leveraging existing ones such as:

Click on each registry to be routed to the patient front end REDCap study site.

- COVID-19 Registry
- Mental Health and Smart Health Technology Registry
- Diabetes Registry
- GI Registry
- Women's Health Registry

To request research registries recruitment services for your project or department please contact us at researchregistry@mednet.ucla.edu.

Explore Frequently Asked Questions

General Information on Research Recruitment Registries

What are the UCLA Research Recruitment Registries?

The Research Recruitment Registries streamline participant recruitment by offering specialized registries. These platforms enable the public to voluntarily register their interest in being contacted for future research studies within specific topic areas. They are used to recruit UCLA patients and non-UCLA patients. Common search criteria to identify a cohort includes: demographics, health conditions, medications, mental health. Registry participants are local to Los Angeles, as well as, from across the nation. Please note, that the registries are not linked with UCLA electronic health record.

What are the available UCLA Research Recruitment Registries?

The available UCLA research recruitment registries are the Mental Health and Smart Health Technology Registry, Diabetes Registry, GI Registry, Wildfires Registry, and ResearchMatch.

Please reference this document for more detailed information:
https://uclahs.az1.qualtrics.com/CP/File.php?F=F_8okwS7KkqxChZGK

How many people are in the registries*?

Mental Health & Smart Health Technology Registry: 37,727

GI Registry: 5,103

Diabetes Registry: 7,610

Wildfires Registry: 3,892

ResearchMatch: 121,200

**As of 06/05/2025*

What response rate can I expect with using Research Recruitment Registries?

Prior studies utilizing these registries have demonstrated their effectiveness, achieving enrollment rates of approximately 10% - 12% of those contacted.

Approval Process, Timeline, and Fees

What is the process to get approval for using UCLA Research Recruitment Registries?

1. Submitting a Qualtrics form.
2. A feasibility consultation with ECRI.
3. IRB submission/approval for Registry use to recruit. Amendment language and recruitment message template will be provided by ECRI after consultation.
4. Principal Investigator signs SOW

5. Data Extract from CTSI honest broker
6. ECRI sends out recruitment blasts

If interested in using CareConnect research recruitment tools, fill out: https://uclahs.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8G7lHnOQEbYONaS

Are there fees associated with using UCLA Research Recruitment Registries?

Yes, there are estimated fees associated with using the registries for recruitment. There is a one-time ECRI Research Recruitment outreach set-up Fee: $440. Additionally, there's a Registry Bulk messaging Fee: $92 per blast sent out. *And there is a monthly coordinating fee of 2 hours per month while blasts are actively being sent out = $184 per month for managing patient inquiries and metrics reporting.*

How do I estimate cost for Research Registry bulk messaging?

Scenario: A study is looking to recruit participants and do not have any restrictions on how many participants can be processed per week/month. They want 500 messages to go out per blast. Given a 7% enrollment rate they will require 15 blasts to meet their recruitment goal. Each blast is $92.

- Recruitment Goal: 500 participants
- Enrollment Rate: 7%
- Blasts Required: 15
- Total Cost: $1,380

At what point in the process will the team be billed?

ECRI will send out an invoice to the study team after the first blast of recruitment messages are sent. The first invoice will include the one-time ECRI Research Recruitment Registry Outreach Set-Up fee plus any registry recruitment message blasts sent out.

Studies will be billed monthly for the services performed the preceding month. Invoices will be sent by the 15th business day after the end of the service month and the FAU provided before work was initiated will be billed 5 business days after the invoice is sent to the study team. Unless another FAU is provided or questions/concerns arise regarding services performed.

What is Needed from Study Teams

What do we need from you to process your request?

Submit an intake form so ECRI can set-up a consultation: https://uclahs.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8G7lHnOQEbYONaS

You will be prompted to attach your study protocol, study IRB application (if approved at time of submission), and study Informed Consent Form as well as other basic study information such as inclusion/exclusion criteria, expected recruitment dates, challenges recruitment, etc.

How do you prepare for the feasibility consultation with ECRI?

Review the information sent out via email prior to the consultation.

Who is ECRI and their Role

What is the ECRI team?

Embedded Clinical Research and Innovation (ECRI) Unit (CTSI) manages all requests from research teams interested in using UCLA's Research Registries to recruit for their studies. ECRI conducts feasibility review, identifies available cohort, requests list of eligible people from CTSI Honest Broker, send recruitment messages via Research Registry mailbox account, and triages inquiries to study team. Most importantly ECRI ensures that the study has IRB approval to use research registries to recruit for the target cohort.

Last updated: 25 Nov 2025

REDCap Support

For streamlined data collection and management, our team provides expert support in building REDCap surveys and study tracking mechanisms. Whether building surveys or configuring study tracking systems, we ensure seamless integration to support your research objectives.

To request REDCap services for your project please contact us at ECRIrequest@mednet.ucla.edu.

Last updated: 4 Jun 2024

EMBRACE Network

ECRI has launched the **EMBRACE Program (Empowering Individuals 55+ by Bringing Research Awareness through Community Engagement)** to address health disparities among underserved older adults in clinical research participation.

The program has created a community network in partnership with senior living facilities and senior community centers across Los Angeles County. This network serves as a platform to bring research awareness, education, and opportunities directly to older adults, particularly those from English, Spanish, Russian, Korean, and Farsi-speaking communities aged 55 and above.

Through a trusted network of 10 senior living and 8 community centers across Los Angeles County, EMBRACE is opening doors for research teams to connect with older adults in ways that were not possible before. This community-based infrastructure is more than a resource, it is a platform for innovation in recruitment, engagement, and inclusion of seniors in research.

If you are a **Principal Investigator, research coordinator, or study sponsor** seeking to recruit older adults EMBRACE offers a proven engagement model and a curated participant registry.

We support studies by:

- Recruiting via the EMBRACE network
- On-site research study presentations
- Multilingual, culturally tailored outreach
- Development of outreach materials
- Collection of community feedback

Who We Engage

- Individuals aged 55+
- English, Spanish, Russian, Korean, and Farsi-speaking communities
- Participants from African American, Latino, Korean, Persian, and other backgrounds

Consultations are required for all study collaboration or grant requests. To discuss feasibility and support options, please contact us at: **EMBRACEProgram@mednet.ucla.edu**

FAQs:

General Information on EMBRACE Recruitment

Who can use EMBRACE recruitment services?

UCLA researchers interested in recruiting older adult populations may request a consultation with the EMBRACE team. IRB approval is not required at the time of inquiry.

How does EMBRACE support recruitment?

We use our network to deliver in-person education sessions on study opportunities, distribute multilingual materials, and connect interested participants to active studies. We also provide support with IRB language for submissions and can assist with updating flyer materials to ensure they are appropriate for the target population.

What types of studies are eligible for EMBRACE recruitment?

We support studies that are appropriate for community-based recruitment, including observational, clinical, and behavioral studies focused on aging, cognition, mobility, chronic disease, and wellness.

Study Team Onboarding, Process & Cost

What is the process to request support from EMBRACE?

All projects begin with a consultation. We'll assess feasibility, recruitment needs, and determine if your study aligns with our network.

Are there fees associated with EMBRACE recruitment services?

Depending on the level of support and number of sites involved, some services may require cost recovery. An estimate is provided post consultation.

What do you need from study teams to get started?

We will need your protocol or study proposal draft, your target recruitment cohort which includes inclusion/exclusion criteria, and timeline.

Can EMBRACE be added to an existing IRB or sponsor agreement?

Yes. We can provide sample language post consultation.

Last updated: 24 Oct 2025

Digital GAP Program

Overview

The CTSI Digital GAP Program Digital GAP Program bridges the digital divide in clinical research by providing technology access to participants who may not have reliable connectivity or smart devices. This collaboration between UCLA Health and Verizon enhances inclusion and engagement in decentralized and hybrid trials by supplying eligible participants with smartphones to facilitate their participation in research.

The Embedded Clinical Research and Innovation (ECRI) Unit, part of the Office of Clinical Research at CTSI, facilitates all Digital GAP service requests to ensure projects meet program eligibility and compliance requirements prior to approval.

ECRI's Role

ECRI serves as the central coordinating unit for the Digital GAP Program, responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving requests from UCLA research teams to confirm alignment with program criteria.
- Screening projects to ensure that device use is justified by participant need and study design.
- Makes the handoff between research study team and the UCLA Mobile Device team once projects are screened as eligible.

UCLA Mobile Device Team Role

- Coordinating logistics with Verizon and UCLA departments for device activation, tracking, and returns.
- Ensuring regulatory compliance with UCLA Health IT, IRB, and data security policies.
- Maintaining oversight of participant agreements, device issuance, and study documentation.

Program Highlights

Each eligible participant receives:

- Android smartphone
- 25GB of high-speed data (with unlimited 3G thereafter)
- Cost: $20/month per participant
- Term: 12-month agreement

These resources help enable participation for individuals who might otherwise face barriers due to lack of access to technology, Wi-Fi, or mobile data.

Eligibility & Participant Agreement

The Digital GAP Program is intended for participants who demonstrate a technological need as part of an approved UCLA clinical study.
Before device issuance:

- The study team must complete an eligibility screening through the Digital GAP Service Request Form.
- ECRI will verify project compliance and participant eligibility.
- Each study participant must review and sign the UCLA Health Research Participant Device Use Agreement, which outlines:
    - Device ownership (property of UCLA Health)
    - Study-related permitted use only
    - Privacy, security, and data protection standards
    - Participant responsibilities for safekeeping and return of devices
    - Liability terms for lost or damaged equipment

Devices are issued solely for research-related activities such as completing surveys, using study apps, or communicating with study staff.

Benefits to Research Studies

- Expand recruitment among traditionally underserved or digitally disconnected populations
- Increase diversity and representation in clinical research participation
- Enhance engagement and retention through digital accessibility
- Enable decentralized and hybrid trial models
- Promote inclusion and equity in clinical research

How to Request Services

Requests for the Digital GAP Program are managed by ECRI.
To initiate a request:

1. Complete the Digital GAP Program Service Request Form.
2. ECRI will review your submission for eligibility and provide next-step guidance.

For additional information or questions, contact ctsidigitalgap@mednet.ucla.edu.

Why It Matters

The Digital GAP Program reflects UCLA's commitment to inclusive, accessible, and equitable research. By leveraging technology to remove participation barriers, UCLA Health and Verizon are empowering communities to engage in clinical trials that advance health innovation and improve outcomes for all.

Last updated: 24 Oct 2025

Last updated: 26 Aug 2022

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