

Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development (EQBMED): Year-end update

December 19, 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic made it clearer than ever that disparities exist between the care and attention that most Americans get and those experienced by underserved and underrepresented communities. Diverse clinical trials are an important way to ensure that all communities receive equitable access to participate in the development of potential new treatments. By committing to enhancing diversity in clinical trial populations, we can better reflect the patient population that will use the new therapy or medicine being studied and solve for improved health outcomes. Ultimately, diverse clinical trials support a better understanding of the medicine.

Yale School of Medicine, Morehouse School of Medicine, the Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) Coordinating Center located at Morehouse, and Vanderbilt University Medical Center are pleased to announce a successful start of the Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development (EQBMED) program. The EQBMED program, funded by a grant from the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), is an initiative to advance community-centric approaches to increase the participation of underrepresented patients in clinical research. McKinsey & Company, through their 10 Actions toward racial equity, is playing a coordinating role to support this effort.

Our vision in this initial 18-month Learning Phase is to develop a patient-centric, scalable model to achieve equity in clinical research for Black, Hispanic, and Latino populations through innovative and sustainable partnerships across patients, communities, clinical trial sites and sponsors of biopharmaceutical research. We will convene these stakeholders to co-design approaches and support 10 sustainable, connected, community-based trial sites in underserved communities. Over time we aspire to expand reach to additional populations, geographies, and sites of care.

Initial successes to lay the foundation for bringing in diverse perspectives that can help accelerate and sustain capability building at each EQBMED site included:

- Codification of a vision statement, standing up of the governance structure, and creation of an 18-month roadmap.
- Formation of Executive Committee, consisting of leaders with community engagement, regulatory, research, and industry expertise to drive the effort forward through regular meetings.
- Expansion of partnerships with community organizations, health system partners, and key leaders.
- Establishment of partnerships with lead clinical trial service providers in the industry coming together as infrastructure partners to provide support to the program and the sites.

The EQBMED team continues to move forward both energized by our strong progress and eager to grow from lessons learned. Over the coming months, we look forward to welcoming sponsors into our program through a range of activities, as well as onboarding additional sites and supporting them in their journeys on achieving the goals they have set forth in this Learning Phase.

In 2023, we will:

- Announce the launch of initial trial sites in Q1 and expansion to various types of sites by the end of the year with the goal of showing proof of concept of the EQBMED model.
- Partner with trusted messengers and community leaders to raise education, awareness, and support for clinical trial participation.
- Provide the resources and technical support for local sites to be successful, sustainable, and thrive.
- Build training opportunities and mentorship for investigators and staff.

By the end of the Learning Phase, we anticipate that community-based sites will have established sustainable infrastructure to bring clinical trials to underrepresented and underserved patients. Learnings will also be codified through toolkits and training materials for other sites, community organizations, and industry sponsors striving to enhance clinical trial diversity. The proof of concept and the network of partnerships and expertise developed through the Learning Phase will lay the foundation to scale impact to diverse communities across the country.

About EQBMED leaders

Yale School of Medicine: The Yale Center for Clinical Investigation (YCCI) at the Yale School of Medicine has spearheaded efforts to change the landscape of diversity in clinical trials for over a decade. YCCI provides infrastructure and training to support clinical research and works to improve the health of all individuals and communities by increasing participation of marginalized population in clinical research.

Morehouse School of Medicine and the Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) Coordinating Center: Morehouse School of Medicine was recognized as the nation's number one medical school in fulfilling a social mission—the creation and advancement of health equity. The RCMI Coordinating Center at Morehouse School of Medicine supports the RCMI Consortium, which has NIH funded research centers located in Historically Black, Hispanic and Minority Serving Institutions that are leading innovations in health disparities research across diverse communities.

Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC): With a focus on advancing personalized health care for people from all backgrounds and populations, VUMC brings unmatched expertise to the EQBMED, including novel biomedical informatics approaches to trial recruitment and retention and innovative approaches to engaging marginalized and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations in clinical research.

About EQBMED grant

PhRMA: Since June 2020, PhRMA has convened thousands of stakeholders to explore a new potential infrastructure with diverse communities, health systems, and academia that seeks to show proof of concept for a network of connected, community-rooted trial sites. With strong support from the biopharmaceutical industry, this effort seeks to create a sustainable, community-based infrastructure focused on clinical trial diversity. PhRMA provided a grant to Yale School of Medicine to support the creation and development of this initiative.