

NCI Internal – Not for Distribution

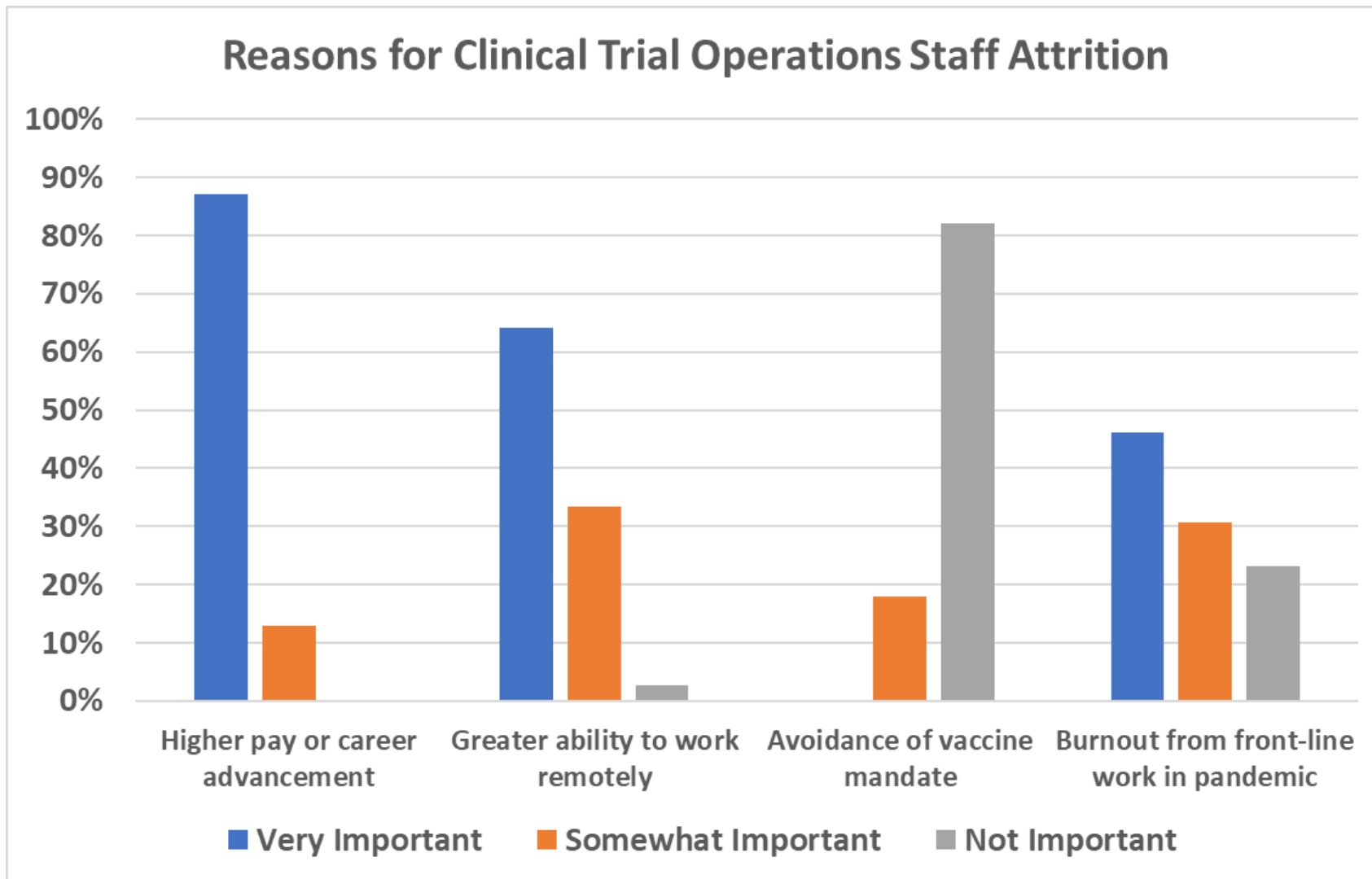
NCI Cancer Clinical Research Workforce Initiatives

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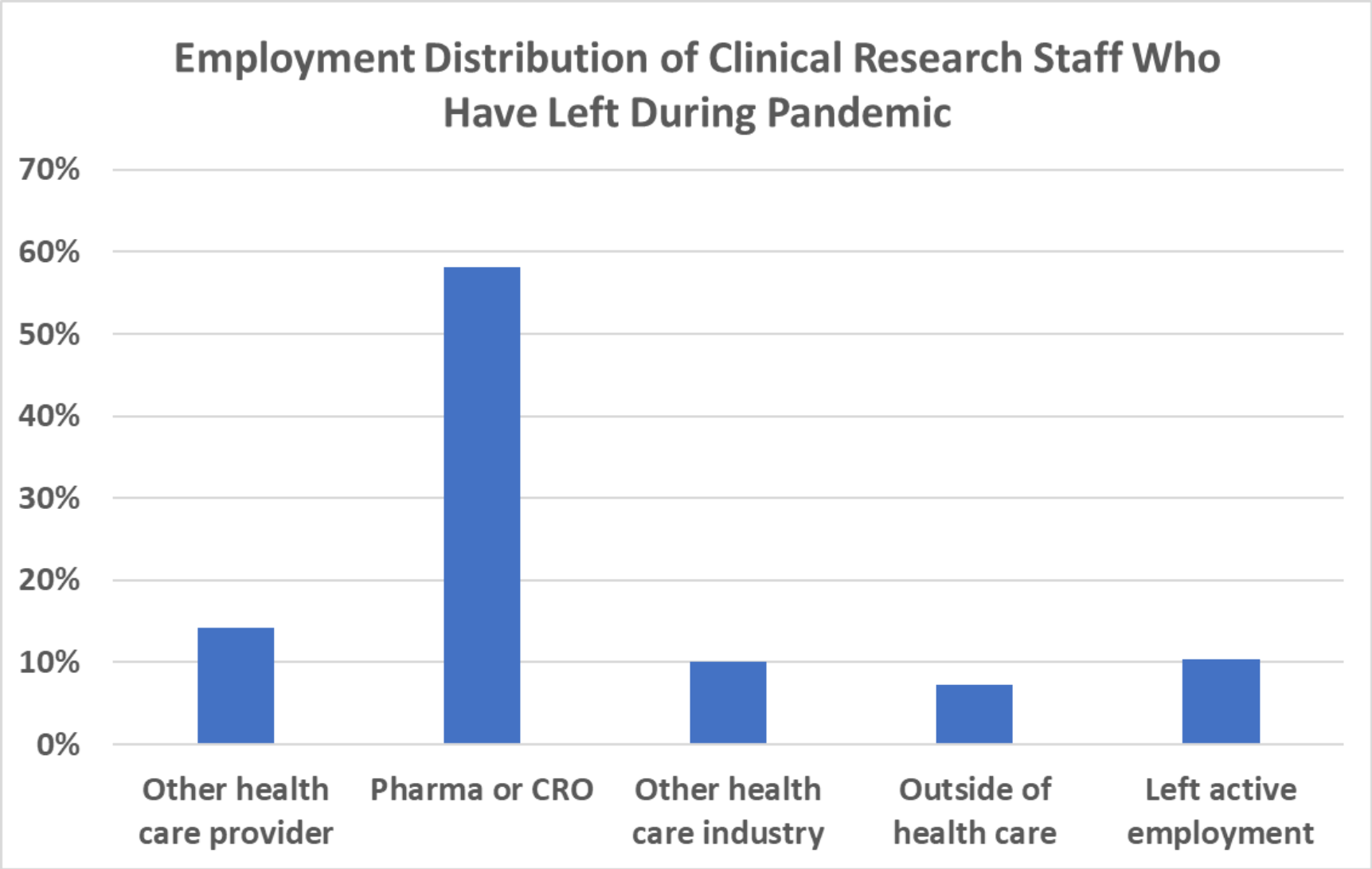
Cancer Centers Clinical Trials Workforce Survey

- Conducted November 2021
- Response rate 100% (64/64 clinical Cancer Centers)
- Documented strong impact of pharma/CRO “poaching”
 - Loss of staff, both senior and recently-trained
 - Smaller pool of qualified candidates for replacement hires
 - Higher compensation spurred by competition from pharma/CRO makes Cancer Centers less cost-effective for pharma/CRO work, threatening important research opportunities as well as income stream to support clinical trial office

Proportion of Centers Reporting Each View



Respondent group for this question: the 38 clinical Cancer Centers that currently report <90% pre-pandemic clinical research operations staff FTE



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Workforce Discussions with Cancer Center Leadership

- Conducted March – May 2023
- 12 Cancer Centers selected to represent wide range of clinical research staff sizes as well as broad geographic distribution to reflect different regional labor markets
- Topics
 - Current clinical trials workforce status
 - Steps taken to address clinical trials workforce challenges, lessons learned
 - Scope and value of potential NCI initiatives

Cancer Centers Selected for Workforce Discussions

- MD Anderson
- Dana-Farber/Harvard
- MSKCC
- Mayo Clinic
- FHCRC/Univ of Washington
- Univ of Kansas
- Knight/Ohio State
- Roswell Park
- Simon/Indiana Univ
- Norris/USC
- Rutgers
- Univ of Virginia

Adapting to Maintain an Adequate Clinical Trials Workforce

- Cancer Centers highly resourceful in adapting to COVID disruption
- Adaptations vary based on institutional policies, local labor markets and local educational resources
- Most important adaptations across Cancer Centers:
 - Salary adjustments
 - More flexibility for remote work wherever tasks allow
 - More differentiated job descriptions and more structured career ladders
 - Facilitates entry by less-experienced candidates
 - Provides more opportunities for career growth and recognition
 - Efforts to reduce burdensome institutional hiring procedures
 - Collaborations with local educational institutions to build training pipeline for entry-level positions

Views on NCI Remote Clinical Research Services

- Data entry/data management overwhelmingly considered most useful and feasible remote service
- Remote staff should be trained in NCI and NCTN procedures and, if possible, dedicated to supporting NCTN protocols
- Training on specific NCTN protocols would be ideal

NCI Virtual Clinical Trials Office (VCTO) Initiative

- Builds on concept piloted by Gulf South Minority/Underserved NCORP
- Provide remote services to support NCI trials conducted at NCI-Designated Cancer Centers and NCORP sites
- Research nurses, CRAs, & regulatory affairs personnel organized through NCI-Frederick National Lab Clinical Research Directorate
 - Long history of providing clinical trial professionals for NIAID antiviral studies both nationally and internationally
 - Support provided both on site and virtually, including trial auditing from EHRs located at academic health systems and private practices

Initial Services Under Consideration for VCTO

- Eligibility screening and study coordination; promote trial entry of underserved patients
- Assistance with informed consent, enrollment, protocol queries, “help desk” functions
- Data entry/abstraction from EHR to Medidata Rave for NCTN, ETCTN, NCORP trials (requires approval by health provider to access protocol-specified patient data in EHR by remote login)
- Coordinating study visits, procedures, participant reminders, improve retention
- Regulatory support
- Adverse event reporting

VCTO Implementation Timeline

- February 2023: Request for expression of interest sent to all NCI-Designated Cancer Centers from Drs. Ciolino and Doroshow
 - Overall strong positive response from both large and small Centers, though a few could not take advantage of the program because of unionized clinical research staff or issues with EHR access
- July 2023: Initial participants identified – 3 Cancer Centers and 3 NCORP sites
- Initial staff have been hired by NCI-Frederick and will be expanded quickly so that discussion and planning of services with initial sites can begin this summer
- VCTO services to begin in early Fall 2023

Entry-Level Training Pipeline Identified as Key Need

- Highlighted as area for meaningful NCI impact
- Considerable opportunity seen in partnerships with local high schools and community/four-year colleges:
 - Developing and implementing training curricula
 - Creating internship opportunities
 - Building student awareness of clinical research as a career and of the variety of available roles
 - Attracting interest from populations not traditionally represented in clinical research careers

Potential NCI Clinical Research Training Initiatives

- Awards to consortia/partnerships of Cancer Centers and local educational institutions to support development/implementation of:
 - Curricula and materials addressing entry-level clinical research skills
 - Materials and communication campaign to increase awareness of clinical research as a career opportunity
- Supplemental awards to Cancer Centers to support:
 - Mentorship and other costs of hosting student internships
 - Tuition support for students in community/four-year college clinical research training programs in return for service commitment

CTAC Discussion

- Factors NCI should consider as the VCTO program is implemented
- Comments on potential NCI training initiatives
 - Importance of expanding entry-level training pipeline
 - Awards to consortia to develop training and communication initiatives targeted at entry level candidates
 - Supplemental awards to Cancer Centers for student mentorship and tuition support
- Other steps NCI should consider in the area of clinical trials workforce training