

# REVOLUTIONISING CLINICAL TRIAL RECRUITMENT: UNLEASHING SOCIAL MEDIA'S POWER!

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Overcoming cancer together

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The VCCC Alliance acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which we carry out our work across Victoria.

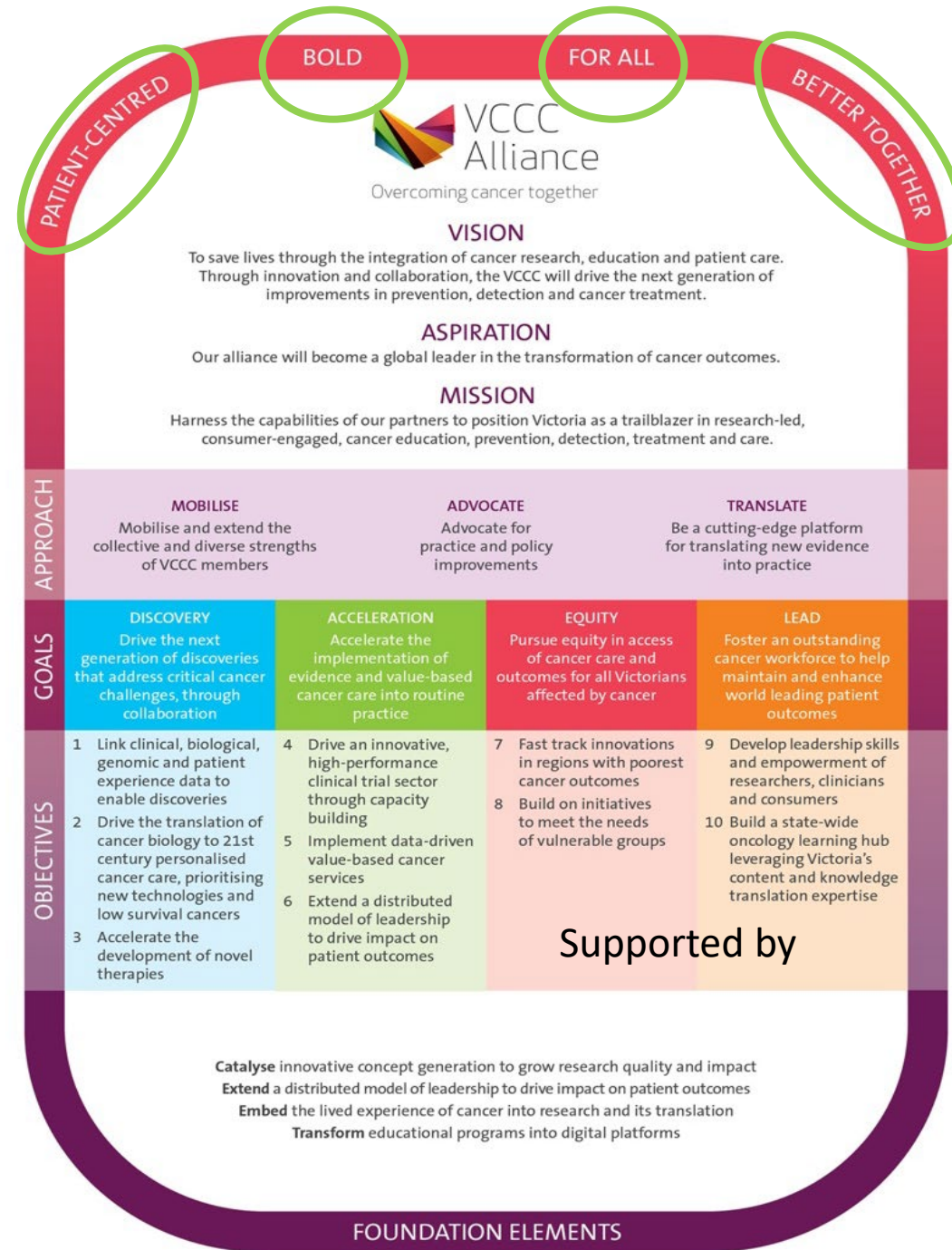
We recognise and value their continuing cultural heritage, beliefs and deep connection with the land and waters.



# STRATEGIC PROGRAM PLAN (2021-2024)



<https://www.viccompncancerctr.org/about-us/strategy/strategic-program-plan-2021-24/>



# COLLABORATING PARTNERS



**Peter Mac**  
Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre  
Victoria Australia



**The Royal Melbourne Hospital**



**CLINICAL TRIAL CARE**

PARKVILLE  
CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS UNIT



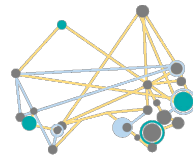
the women's  
the royal women's hospital



Western Health



A FACILITY OF ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA



# NETWORKED / COLLECTIVE IMPACT APPROACH

VCCC Alliance's role in Australian cancer eco-system

**Facilitator, enabler, connector**

- Strong connections with:
  - cancer research institutions and hospitals across Australia
  - state and national governments
  - advocacy organisations
  - consumer groups
  - Integrated Cancer Services
  - Cancer Councils



DISORDER & CONFUSION



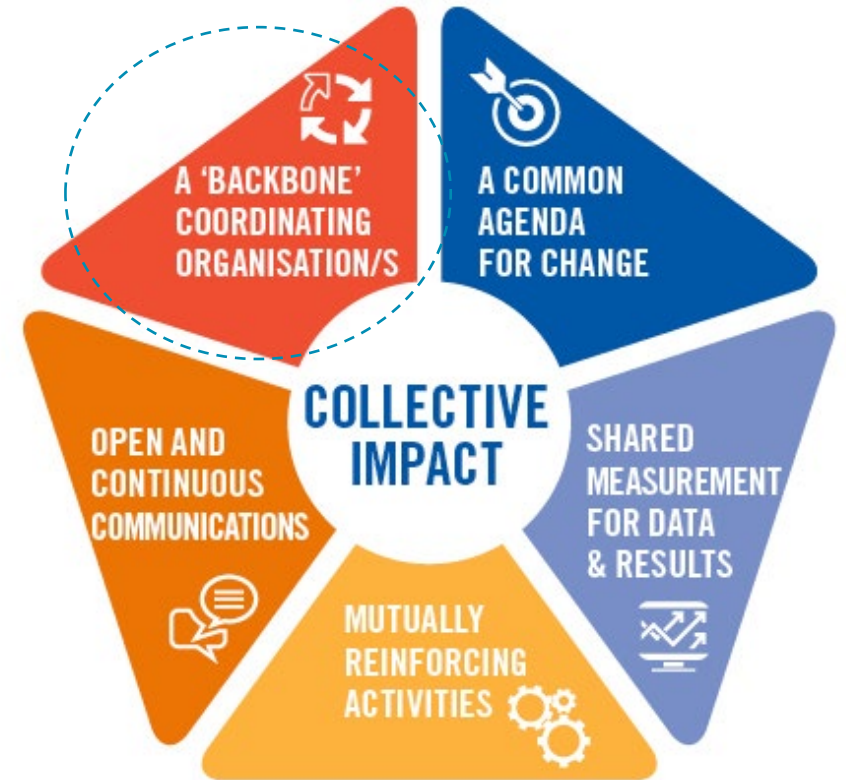
INDIVIDUAL IMPACT  
in isolation



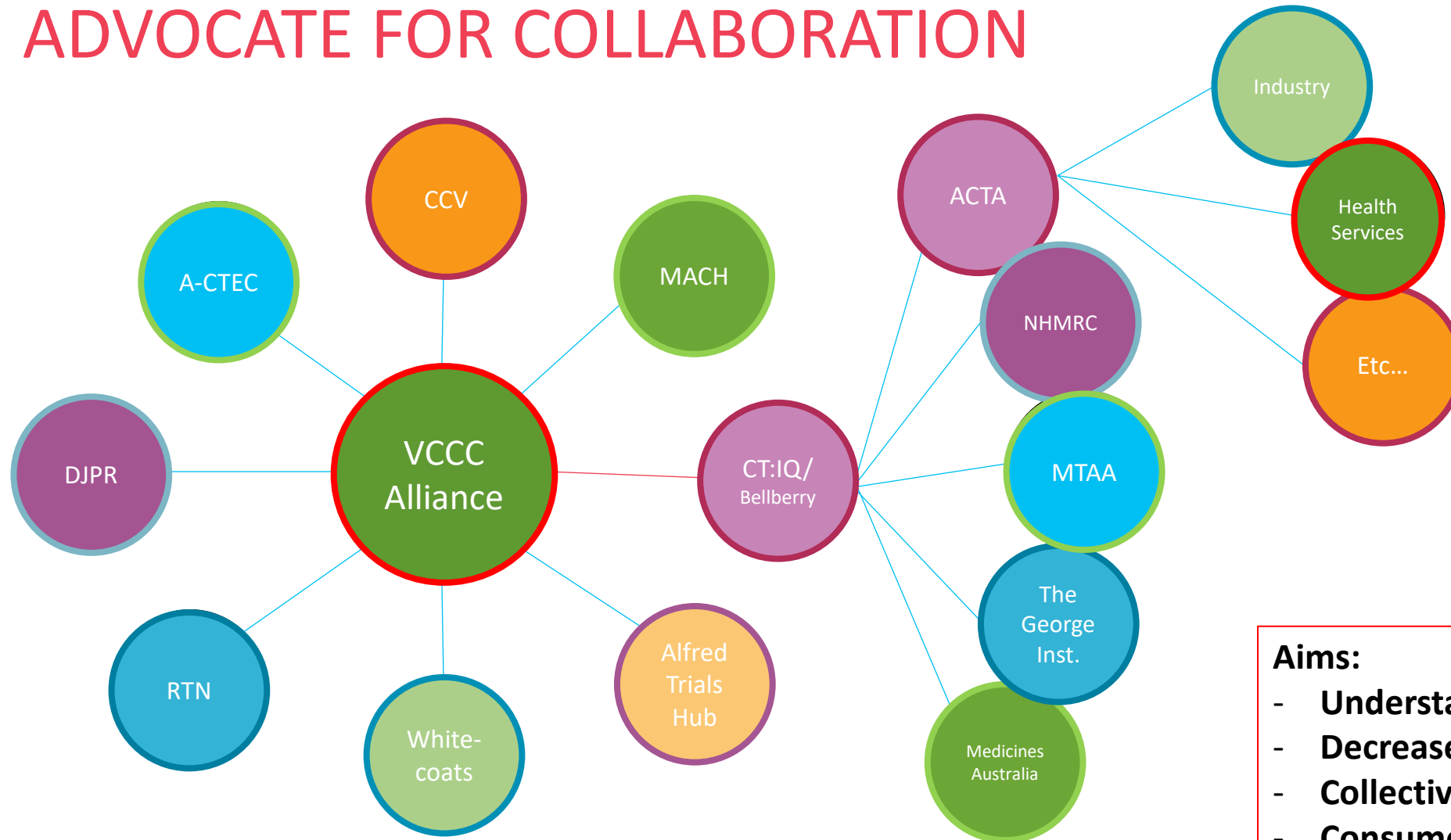
COORDINATED IMPACT  
with alignment



COLLECTIVE IMPACT  
with collaborative action



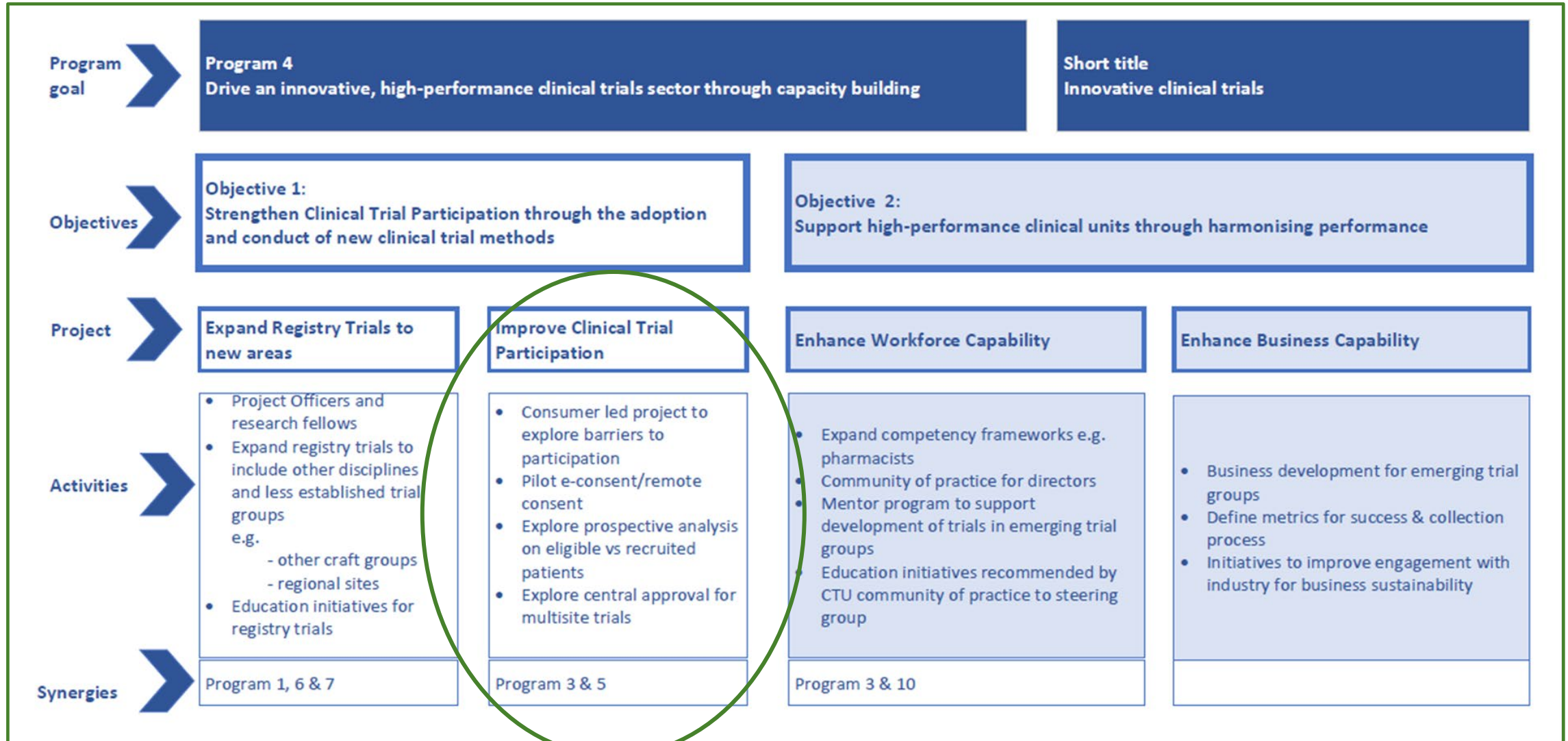
# ADVOCATE FOR COLLABORATION



## Aims:

- **Understand and realise synergies**
- **Decrease duplication of effort**
- **Collective Impact**
- **Consumer centred**

# CLINICAL TRIAL INNOVATION OVERVIEW



## PROJECT 4.2 – EXPAND OR DEVELOP NEW METHODOLOGIES TO *IMPROVE CLINICAL TRIAL PARTICIPATION*

### *Sub-project 4.2.1: New methods of consent*

*Explore the use of two way communication in clinical research and clinical trials – with CT:IQ*

### *Sub-project 4.2.2: Barriers to clinical trial participation*

Patient's view on clinical trial matching websites

Clinician's perceptions on registry trials

Consumer awareness campaign (boosting awareness, debunking myths)

**Social media as a recruitment tool**



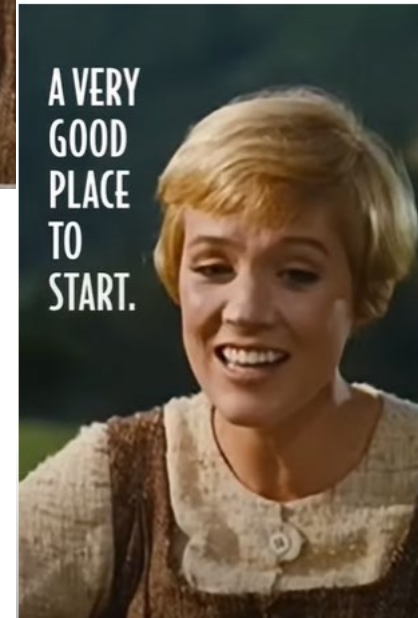
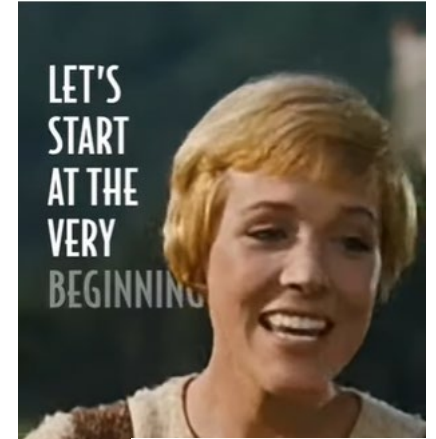
# WHY SOCIAL MEDIA MATTERS... IN CLINICAL TRIALS

Patient recruitment remains a (huge) problem

Around 20% close for poor recruitment but many more are affected

Lack of or slow recruitment can lead to issues with:

- Unnecessary cost to sites
- Obsolescence
- Ethical issues (unnecessary risk to patients), confidence by researchers and patients and
- Progression of the science!



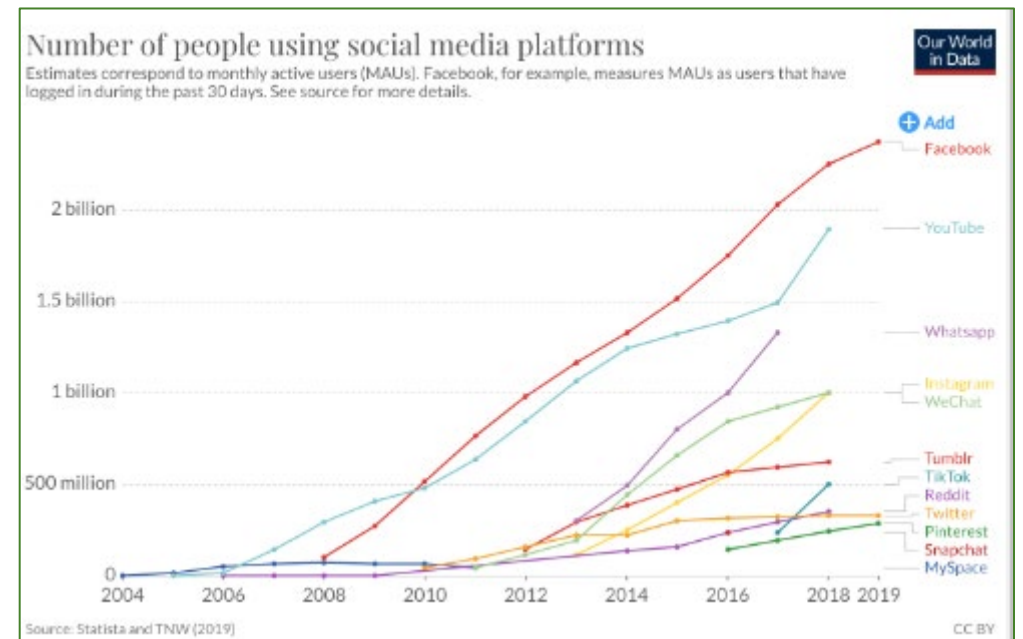
# ADVERTISING TO SOLVE POOR RECRUITMENT

## Traditional:

- Flyers
- Posters
- Signs

## Digital:

- Social Media



# PROMISES, PROMISES

Cheap  
Effective  
Targeted

But...

Lots of work  
Unclear how/who to moderate  
False positives in screening



# OUR HYPOTHESIS

- Improving the understanding of the use of social media can improve clinical trial recruitment

## **Steps**

- Scoping work
- Contacting stakeholders
- Understand the landscape and limitations of current resources

# WHAT WE FOUND

- Confusion!
- Information was out of date
- Updates were needed
- Information was often brief
- Emphasis was on 'effective' social media use
- The enigma of a 'social media plan'

## National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research

- 3.1.19 For many research projects, researchers should provide reviewers with proposed recruitment materials (e.g. notices, flyers, advertisements, and social media posts) prior to use, including those materials that are developed subsequent to the initial review of the research proposal. However, for some research designs or where recruitment material needs to be ad lib, adapted or tailored to the context (such as some social media, radio or other oral communication) a description of the strategy and broad messages is sufficient.



## Social Media: Use in Research

Social Media can be used as a tool for research in a number of ways, such as advertising, recruiting and communicating with participants. As well as taking the time to understand the advantages and limitations of the different social media platforms (to be used in your research project), please also ensure you consider the relevant ethical and governance issues when considering the use of social media in your research study.

### Governance:

1. All use of Social Media e.g. Facebook, for a research study must be approved by the RCH Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and must comply with RCH and MCRI policies and guidelines. Please ensure you have read the relevant Institution policy:
  - [RCH Social Media Policy](#)
  - [RCH Media Protocol](#)
  - [Media Policy & Procedure \(MCRI7001\)](#)
  - [MCRI Social Media Policy](#)
2. Researchers must not contravene the relevant terms and conditions of the Social Media sites they use e.g. Facebook Policy.

## KNOWLEDGE GAP

What  
was  
available



What  
was  
needed

# THE GOOGLY!

January 12, 2022

## Meta ban on health-targeting ads will soon restrict clinical trial recruiters

[LinkedIn](#) [Twitter](#) [Send](#) [Embed](#)



A new ban on “Detailed Targeting” options for advertisers on Facebook and other Meta-owned social media platforms – which includes restricting marketing based on “health causes” – takes effect January 19, and may make it more challenging for health care and life sciences companies to use these platforms to

WRITTEN BY:

Hogan Lovells

Messenger, and WhatsApp.

Providing examples of targeting categories that would not be allowed under its new policy that bans “Detailed Targeting” options for advertisers, Meta cited “Lung cancer awareness,” “World Diabetes Day,” and “LGBT culture.”

However, Facebook’s announcement of its new policy also includes recommendations for advertisers trying to find the right audience, including broad targeting via gender and age. Facebook advertisers will still be able to employ location based-targeting, including finding individuals based on ZIP code. Without the corresponding disease information, these are seemingly of less value.



# WHAT SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE WAS IN OUR SCOPE?

IN

Support  
Awareness  
= FAQ and  
Procedures

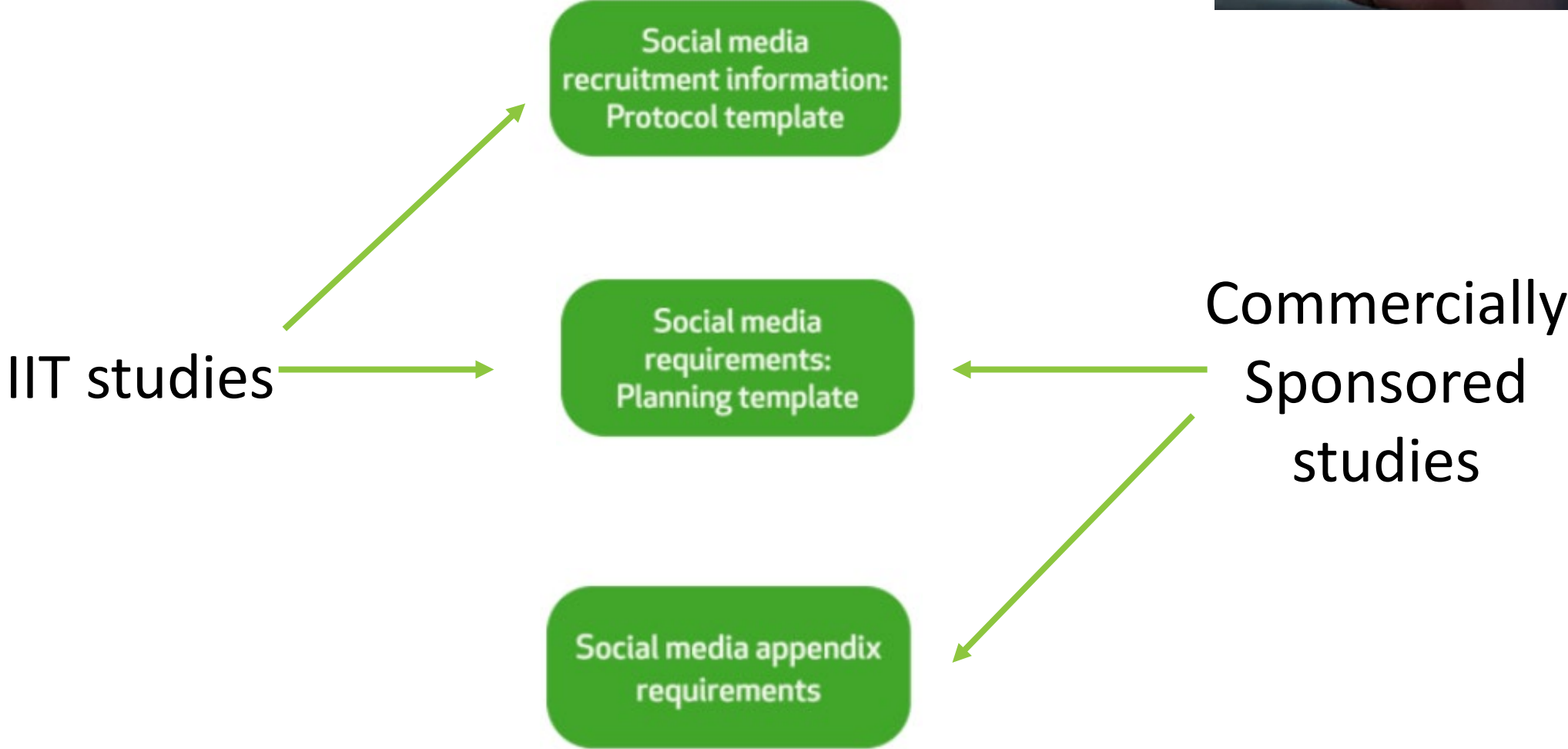


OUT

Policies  
SOPs



# SUPPORTING RESEARCHERS FROM THE HREC'S LENS



## Social media requirements for clinical trials

**The information gathered here can be used to communicate with HREC.**

Planning	
Target audience	E.g. 18-30 year olds
Social media platforms to run ads	Twitter <input type="checkbox"/>
	LinkedIn <input type="checkbox"/>
	Facebook <input type="checkbox"/>
	Instagram <input type="checkbox"/>
	Google Ads <input type="checkbox"/>
Why social media will be used	E.g. clinical recruitment is limited by xxx and we need to reach a wider audience because of xxx
Clinical trial dates	[Insert dates]
Period ads will be live /recruitment phase	[Insert dates]
What assets/text will be used (if available)	E.g. Image on tile/text on tile/post copy/ad copy
Budget	Can include a breakdown of spend per platform
Who is paying for the advertisement?	Include the funder of the post
What measures are in place to protect the privacy of those that respond to the post?	E.g. turning off ability to respond to the post of outline monitoring E.g. including a warning such as "Depending on your Facebook privacy settings, posts that you follow, like or comment on may be able to be seen by your Facebook Friends or others".

Social media requirements: Planning template

Social media appendix requirements

**Directions for researchers: please amend the blue sections below.**

### Appendix:

Social media will be used to recruit participants. Social media is going to be used because [e.g it will allow for recruitment of a wider audience that we are unable to recruitment from the hospital alone]. We intend to use [Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Google Ads etc] to advertise to [insert target audience e.g. adults 18 years and older]. Advertising is expected to last for [insert duration e.g. 6 months] and begin [specific date or as soon as all necessary approvals have been provided]. Please see below for an outline of the planned advertisements.

#### Advertisement 1:

Link	Insert URL to recruitment page
Key message	What is the <u>one</u> thing people need to know about this clinical trial?
Headline	25 characters max
Description including any images	100 characters max

#### Advertisement 2:

Link	Insert URL to recruitment page
Key message	What is the <u>one</u> thing people need to know about this clinical trial?
Headline	25 characters max
Description including any images	100 characters max

## Non-Interventional Protocol Description

Project Title	
Version Date	DD/MM/YYYY
<b>This document is a protocol for a research project.</b> This study will be conducted in compliance with the NHMRC National Statement on ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), the Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice (CPMP/ICH-135/95) and any stipulations as outlined by the reviewing Human Research Ethics Committee.	
Project Ethics Number (Office Use Only)	HREC/XXXXX/Austin-202X

### Section 1 - Administrative Information

#### 1.1 – Project Classification

Please tick the correct classification for your project	<input type="checkbox"/> Intention to publish in scientific journal and any samples taken are part of standard of care. This is classified as research, therefore requiring approval from Ethics Committee or their delegate.
	<input type="checkbox"/> No intention to publish, part of Organisation's "Quality and Safety" continuous improvement processes and to be registered in the Projects and Improvements Database. This means you are exempt from Ethical Review but you cannot publish in a scientific forum. Register your QI project via Quality & Safety on the Projects and Improvements Database.

#### 1.2- Site Specific Investigators

Name	Site Department	Role e.g. Associate Investigator	Email
		Principal Investigator	
		Associate	

Social media recruitment information: Protocol template

## SOCIAL MEDIA FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

When a trial is considered advertising, examples include the paid advert for a specific study, or a post on the institution's social media web page.

### How are social media recruitment strategies different to traditional advertising?

Social media and traditional advertising are actually very similar. However, because social media has a wider reach and people may be able to publicly comment on the advertisement/post, there are additional privacy concerns to consider.

### What are these additional privacy concerns?

When adverts are posted on social media, people can leave comments and are identifiable. There need to be measures in place to ensure that comments or 'liking' the advert do not collect personal, identifiable information.

	Social Media Advertising	Traditional Advertising
What is the 'advertisement'?	The final social media post, including any video needs to be submitted to HREC and RGO for approval	The printed advertising material (e.g. poster) needs to be submitted to HREC and RGO for approval
What approvals are needed?	HREC needs to approve the material The institution's social media page needs to agree that it can be used (as appropriate) Social media company guidelines need to be followed	HREC needs to approve the material The institution needs to approve where it will be displayed
What happens when the advertising material is updated?	Each update needs to be approved as above. However, acknowledging the dynamic nature of social media, the National Statement notes that where the material needs to be 'ad lib', tailored or adapted, "a description of the strategy and broad messages is sufficient" (National Statement 3.1.20).	Each update needs to be approved as above.
What are the specific privacy issues?	Privacy concerns of the audience need to be considered and communicated with HREC	N/A - unless there is a link from a poster to a social media site.

## FAQ

Designed as a quick reference

Covers the basics

Includes a comparison table

Audience is researchers and other inquisitive people!

# GUIDANCE PROCEDURE

More content than the FAQ

Audience is researchers

Can support an institution's  
SOPs/Policy



## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE PROCEDURE FOR RESEARCHERS

### Background

Social media has emerged as a widely used and powerful communication tool. It is therefore no surprise that it has become a major platform for advertising to the public, and most social media applications derive their income from advertising. Given its widespread usage and reach, it is increasingly being applied to reach potential participants to inform them about clinical research and to encourage participation.

From a regulatory perspective, use of social media as an advertising platform does not differ in any material way from the use of other media – that is, the content of any written or spoken material must abide by ethical and legal requirements. However, there are some additional privacy-related ethical and legal concerns raised due to the ability to engage with people in open forums where individuals may not understand the implications and reach of the personal information on their profiles.

When considering use of social media, it is important that researchers understand the advantages and limitations of these platforms to ensure they have considered and addressed the relevant ethical and research governance issues.

### Purpose

To describe the specific compliance requirements for advertising research projects using social media.

### Responsibilities

This document covers the responsibilities for researchers involved with using social media for advertising and patient recruitment.

### Procedure

### Ethical approval

# NEXT STEPS

Website launch

Conferences

Abstracts

Journal paper...

## Effective use of social media as a clinical trial recruitment tool



**Authors:** Duncan Colyer<sup>1</sup>, Peter Gibb<sup>1</sup>, Nik Zeps<sup>1</sup>, Heidi Gaulke<sup>1</sup>, Eleonora Kay<sup>1</sup>  
**Institutions:** <sup>1</sup>VCCC Alliance, Melbourne, VIC, Australia <sup>2</sup>Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, Melbourne, VIC, Australia <sup>3</sup>Monash Partners, Melbourne, VIC, Australia <sup>4</sup>Austin Health, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

### Project aims

The successful recruitment of patients is widely regarded as one of the most challenging aspects of conducting clinical trials. Poor participant recruitment is the most frequent reason for premature discontinuation of clinical trials which has a significant impact on conclusive results, confidence of trials staff, and ethical consideration for participants. Social media has emerged as a commonly used and powerful communication tool, however its use in reaching potential participants in clinical trials remains unrealised. The Improve Participation project at the VCCC Alliance endeavoured to develop reliable guidance resources to support researchers to understand both the opportunities and the additional considerations in using social media for clinical trials recruitment, with a particular focus on its regulatory and ethical requirements.

### Methodology

Advertising clinical trials is not new from posters in waiting rooms to the sides of buses. The introduction of social media as a medium has not provided the solution to the recruitment problems noted above. Investigating this phenomenon, an initial scoping exercise was undertaken by the VCCC Alliance looking at current advice on the use of social media in research.

Guidance was noted to be:  
> Outdated, often by a decade  
> Focused on making social media 'effective'  
> Centred on a 'social media plan', without an example  
> Related to the policies and guidelines of an institution rather than the content of the posts themselves.  
In conclusion, the current guidance was failing to address the needs of researchers, and prevented social media

recruitment content that was either appropriate for potential participants or acceptable to Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) for approval.  
Working with subject matter experts, the requirements of researchers, consumers and HRECs were defined, and relevant resources were developed. Alongside the needs for general guidance, it was acknowledged that differences between Sponsored and Investigator Initiated Trials (SITs), related to the amount of influence the researcher had over the project, warranted different approaches and dedicated resources.

### Project output and conclusions

A comprehensive suite of guidance documents targeted towards researchers has now been produced. A dedicated webpage on the VCCC Alliance website includes these freely available resources, the FAQ document, guidance procedures, and other related resources and information. It is anticipated that such resources can assist researchers in developing suitable approaches to social media recruitment and communicating these to appropriately to HRECs. An evaluation of the resources has been established within the webpage.

Please follow the QR code to access the resources:  
[www.vccc.org.au/our-work/research-and-translation/clinical-trial-innovations/social-media-recruitment/](http://www.vccc.org.au/our-work/research-and-translation/clinical-trial-innovations/social-media-recruitment/)



HOME | OUR WORK | RESEARCH AND TRANSLATION | CLINICAL TRIAL INNOVATIONS | SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITMENT

## Social Media Recruitment

Social media has emerged as a widely used and powerful communication tool. It is therefore no surprise that it has become a major platform for advertising to the public. Given its widespread usage and reach, it is increasingly being applied to reach potential participants to inform them about clinical research and to encourage participation.

**This is a new resource. We'd love to hear how you're finding it:**

[Give your feedback](#)

To assist researchers and highlighting the specific compliance requirements, the VCCC Alliance, with input from The Royal Children's Hospital, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, and Austin Health have collaborated on a quick-reference page, resources, and answers to [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) below.

In this section you'll find:

- [What do I need to know about social media advertising first?](#)
- [How to proceed](#)
- [What additional considerations do I need to think about?](#)
- [Resources](#)

For a procedural overview, please download the below Guidance Document.

[Social Media Guidance Procedure for Researchers](#)

### Background Information

- What is considered advertising on social media? [▼](#)
- How are social media recruitment strategies different to traditional advertising? [▼](#)

CLINICAL TRIAL INNOVATIONS

- Investigator-Initiated Trials
- Toolkit
- Facebook-Based Trials
- Instagram Consumer Awareness
- Media Recruitment
- Capability
- Parents and Young Adults
- Feedback

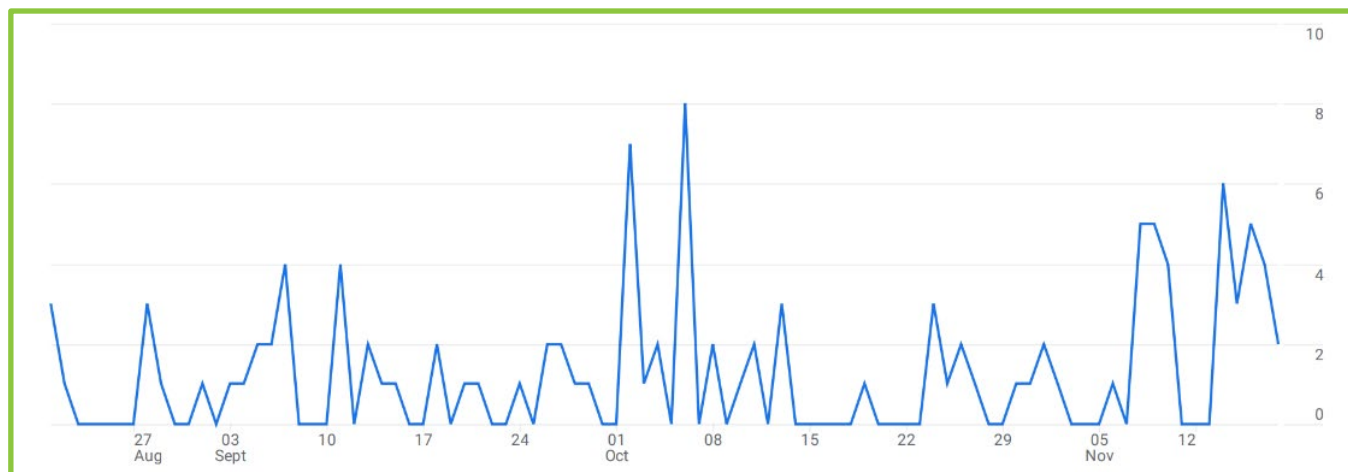
Key contact: [el.kay@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:el.kay@unimelb.edu.au)

RESOURCES

- [Media guidance procedure for researchers](#)
- [Media frequently asked questions](#)
- [Media requirements: Planning](#)
- [Media recruitment information template](#)
- [Media appendix requirements](#)

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# SO FAR...



↓ Views	Users	Views per user	Average session duration	Event count file_download ▾
112 100% of total	74 100% of total	1.51 Avg 0%	2m 08s Avg +<0.01%	35 10.7% of total
112	74	1.51	2m 08s	35

## Evaluate the resources!

## Happy to work with Research Offices too!

- What kind of study are you involved with that you are seeking information on social media recruitment?
  - Phase 1
  - Phase 2
  - Phase 3
  - Non-treatment intervention trial
  - Other /comments:
- Have you ever used social media as a recruitment tool for a clinical trial?
  - Yes
  - No
- Did you consider your social media strategy before or after contacting HREC?
  - Before
  - After
- Did the information on the web page provide you with new insights or considerations for using social media as a recruitment tool for a clinical trial?
  - Yes
  - No
- On a scale of 1 to 5, how informative did you find the information on the web page?
  - 1 - Not informative at all
  - 2 - Somewhat informative
  - 3 - Neutral
  - 4 - Informative
  - 5 - Extremely informative
- How likely are you to recommend this web page to others involved in clinical trial recruitment?
  - 1 - Not likely at all
  - 2 - Somewhat likely
  - 3 - Neutral
  - 4 - Likely
  - 5 - Very likely
- Any Comments: (Free text response)

# ANY QUESTIONS?



More information here:

