Abbott Announces New Partnerships And Programs To Advance Its Diversity In Clinical Trials Initiative

- New efforts focus on research infrastructure, continued training of diverse clinical research personnel and improved diversity within Abbott's own clinical trials
- Abbott's Diversity in Clinical Trials initiative aligns with the company's continued focus for greater health equity, expanded access, affordability and removing barriers to life-saving technology and innovation
- The new programs build on a successful first year of the multi-million-dollar corporate initiative

ABBOTT PARK, Ill., May 11, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Abbott (NYSE: ABT) today announced a series of new programs within its multi-million-dollar initiative to increase diversity in clinical trials and improve care among under-represented populations. The new additions to Abbott's Diversity in Clinical Trials initiative build on the partnerships, scholarships, and the focus on diversified participants in the company's own clinical trials during the initiative's first year.

The latest programs include the launch of a new initiative with the Norton Healthcare Foundation to build and implement new models of sustainable clinical research alongside the Institute for Health Equity, a Part of Norton Healthcarein Louisville, Ky.; a new training program for clinical research coordinators in partnership with Barnett International; and a newly-created Diversity in Research Office at Abbott focused on ensuring diverse representation in clinical trials.

"Clinical trials drive new, innovative tools to fight diseases, and overcoming barriers to access to clinical trials for under-represented communities is critical to improving health equity," said Andrea Wainer, executive vice president, Rapid and Molecular Diagnostics, and co-executive sponsor for the company's Diversity in Clinical Trials steering committee alongside Lisa Earnhardt, executive vice president of Medical Devices at Abbott. "Abbott has been focused on breaking down barriers and implementing new, sustainable partnerships and programs to drive even more diversity in our clinical trials and to ensure trials are offered in more places to reach underserved areas."

Improving Access Through New Clinical Research Models
Through a new five-year commitment, Abbott will work alongside the Institute for Health Equity at Norton Healthcare to build research program models that can be implemented by historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and clinics serving under-represented communities so they don't need to design and develop their own research programs from the ground up, which can be expensive and resource intensive.

Within the program, Abbott and Norton Healthcare will provide a roadmap of best practices to help community-based clinics create clinical trial research centers of excellence. The initiative will also provide grants to support the hiring and training of research coordinators and data managers and help guide the launch of research programs. Alongside building sustainable research programs, the effort aims to increase the number of trial sites that can reach underserved populations to reduce barriers to clinical trials.

The first pilot project stemming from the new grant will work to better connect more people from underrepresented communities to clinical trials. The first project will develop a new research center in Louisville, Ky., focused on helping more African American patients access clinical trial opportunities. The project will specifically support patients in historically redlined areas of Louisville. "Redlining" is a discriminatory practice of withholding services from neighborhoods with significant numbers of racial and ethnic minorities and low-income residents. As a result, those communities have had reduced access to health services, including clinical research opportunities.

"As we focus on improving access to innovative health care options for patients who have been historically under-represented in clinical research, developing new models for research centers that can be implemented within rural or urban community clinics can have a profound impact on improving access to clinical trials for these patients," said Kelly McCants, M.D., a heart failure cardiologist and executive director of the Norton Heart & Vascular Institute Advanced Heart Failure & Recovery Program, who will help launch one of the pilot programs.

Expanding the Pool of Diverse Clinical Research Coordinators
Clinical research coordinators within healthcare clinics, doctor's offices and hospitals are essential to the success of clinical trials. They are key to improving the diversity of clinical trials because they serve as a central point of contact for patients, their families and the investigating physician leading the clinical trial. Through a partnership with Barnett International, Abbott is providing a comprehensive education program to support the training of new coordinators who are from diverse backgrounds and who will work with under-represented communities.

Upon completion of this course, participants will have a strong foundation in essential core areas of conducting clinical research. This includes training on study execution, the patient consent process, Good Clinical Practice guidelines, source documentation requirements and other regulatory required procedures. Offering training to clinical research coordinators with diverse backgrounds will address another key barrier for potential study participants.

New Diversity in Research Office within Abbott
Alongside new external partnerships and programs, the company has established a Diversity in Research Office to further Abbott's focus on driving diversity in the company's clinical trials and improving access to care among under-represented populations.

The new Diversity in Research Office will be led byJennifer Jones-McMeans, Ph.D., divisional vice president of global clinical affairs for Abbott's vascular business, and Aparna Ahuja, M.D., divisional vice president for medical, clinical, and scientific affairs, Infectious Disease, for Abbott's rapid diagnostics business. The office will be responsible for ensuring that research efforts include diversity plans, key performance goals and foster collaboration across Abbott, the industry and regulatory bodies.

"Ensuring that clinical trials are as diverse as the people a product intends to serve is critically important in providing the best health care, so we're developing programs to address as many barriers as possible," said Jones-McMeans. "At Abbott, we've implemented programs that will increase the diversity of trials, including assessing how we conduct our own trials to make sure that we're doing all we can do to increase diversity in our clinical trials by increasing participation from under-served and under-represented populations."

Building Sustainable Change
Abbott's Diversity in Clinical Trials initiative aligns with the company's continued focus for greater health equity, expanded access, affordability and removing barriers to life-saving technology and innovation.

In the first year of the program, Abbott established a Diversity in Clinical Trials Medical Advisory Board comprised of external experts, an internal steering committee and has focused on increasing diversity enrollment in the company's own clinical trials. Through $5 million in grants, the company also sponsored more than 300 scholarships at the four HBCU medical schools and the National Black Nurses Association and National Association of Hispanic Nurses to support future leaders of clinical research.

To learn more about Abbott's Diversity in Research Initiative, visithttps://www.abbott.com/diversity-in-clinical-trials.html.

Innovating for Greater Access and Equity in Health
Abbott's work to drive diversity in medical research is one example of the company innovating for greater access and affordability in health, the key priority of Abbott's 2030 Sustainability Plan. Abbott's ongoing commitment to address health equity challenges also includes targeted programs to create opportunities in STEM for women and underrepresented groups, build a more diverse healthcare supply chain and empower communities to break down social and economic barriers to better health.

About Abbott:
Abbott is a global healthcare leader that helps people live more fully at all stages of life. Our portfolio of life-changing technologies spans the spectrum of healthcare, with leading businesses and products in diagnostics, medical devices, nutritionals and branded generic medicines. Our 115,000 colleagues serve people in more than 160 countries.

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For further information: Abbott Media: Justin Paquette (651) 756-6293, Alicia Swanson (669) 210-7204, Abbott Financial: Mike Comilla (224) 668-1872

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