

# Newsletter



Quarterly news for researchers, health care providers, pharmacists and patients to advance research that addresses local needs.

The Iowa Research Network (IRENE) is a practice-based research network (PBRN) composed of Iowa's primary care physicians, advanced practice providers, and community pharmacists. IRENE is supported by the University of Iowa's Department of Family and Community Medicine, private donors, and external research funding.

## M MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Welcome to summer! School may be out, but we're moving forward with clinical trials and other research projects. The Spring 2025 newsletter included a copy of a pamphlet giving an overview of IRENE and answers to frequently asked questions about participating in research projects. The pamphlet is also available on our website at <https://familymedicine.medicine.uiowa.edu/IRENE/partner-us-irene>.

In this newsletter, we will focus on clinical trials. An illustration on the next page shows the major phases of a clinical trial and typical expectations of participating clinics and pharmacies. Future newsletters will provide more in-depth information about each phase.

Some of the phases can be best described as hurry up and wait. For example, there's always a flurry of activity to meet deadlines when submitting proposals. And then we might wait several months for the sponsor to review proposals and report their funding decision. During the planning phase for a funded clinical trial, researchers submit an application to their institutional review board (IRB), and then wait again for the IRB to review and approve the study protocol and patient communications.

Effort from clinics and pharmacies fluctuates throughout the implementation phase. To minimize any extra work needed from clinic and pharmacy staff, a lot of the tasks associated with a clinical trial are done by research associates paid by the trial.

What's the upside of participating in a clinical trial? Participating clinics and pharmacies typically receive annual payments from the trial. Patients receive access to new and/or expanded services. There's also a lot of opportunities for providers and pharmacists to co-author papers and present at conferences. Participating in a clinical trial is less work than you may expect, and it's deeply meaningful and rewarding work that helps you contribute to systemic improvements in patient care.

Please read on and keep an open mind about how participating in a clinical trial could be an interesting and beneficial opportunity. Thank you!

*Korey A. Kennelty, PharmD, MS, PhD, BCGP  
Director, Iowa Research Network (IRENE)*

## R HIGHLIGHTED RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Opportunity for Neurologically Healthy Older Adults Living in Rural Iowa

The Kiwanis Neuroscience Research Foundation has funded a project to develop a standardized neuropsychological assessment battery that can be administered remotely in patients' homes via secure video conferencing. By collecting robust normative data from 210 neurologically healthy older adults living in rural Iowa communities, this project will establish reliable reference standards for interpreting test results obtained through remote means – a resource that does not currently exist for this population.

We encourage collaborating physicians and pharmacists to share information about this study with eligible patients and their communities. Participation for patients is available at no cost, and the study will provide all equipment necessary for the assessment, including secure internet access for patients that don't have an internet connection.

**Role of IRENE:** Seeking primary care clinics and community pharmacies to distribute pamphlets about the study. If you are interested, please send an email message to [irene@uiowa.edu](mailto:irene@uiowa.edu).

**Principal Investigators:** Dan Tranel, PhD, and Natalie Denburg, PhD

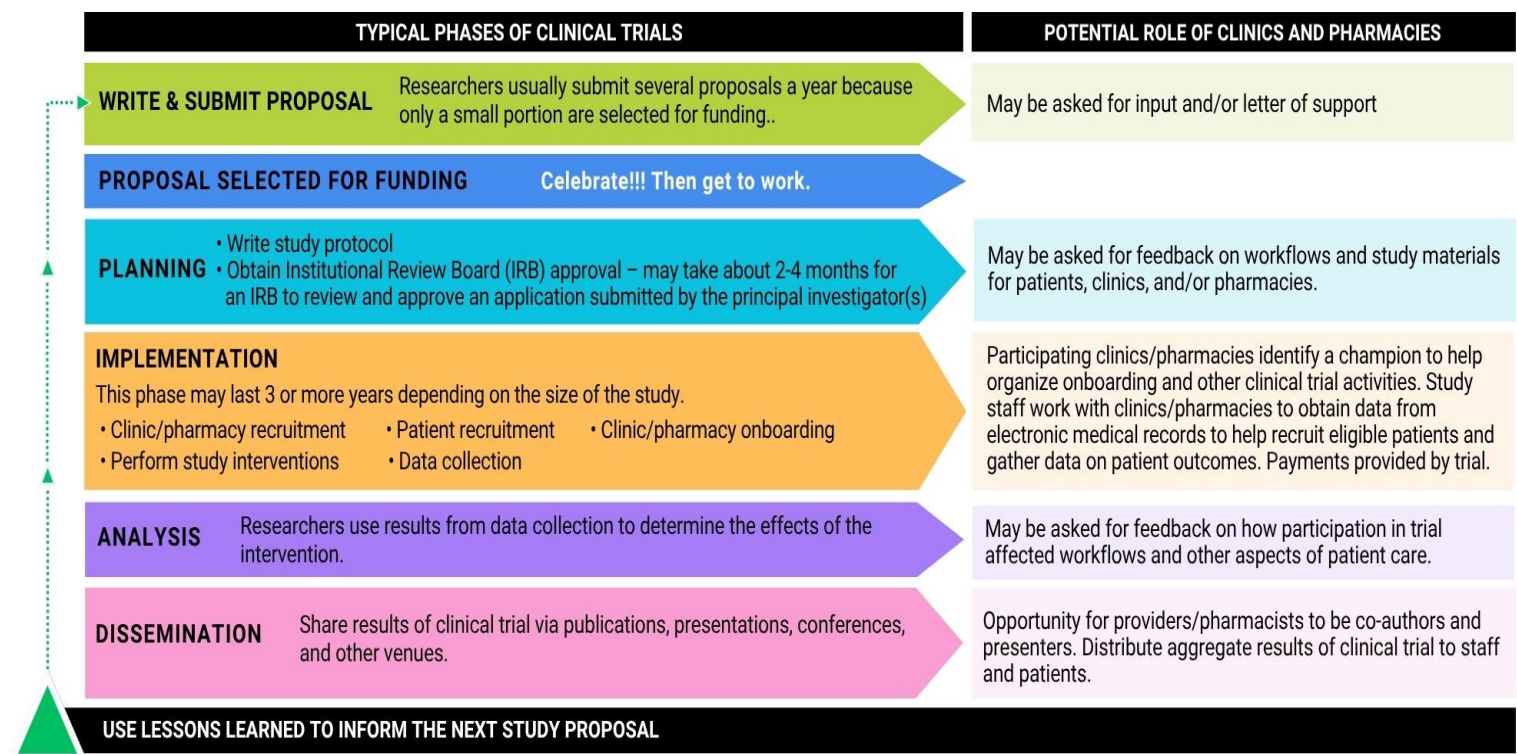
## C TYPES OF CLINICAL TRIALS

In the realm of clinical research, the two main types of clinical trials are:

- Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)
- Pragmatic Clinical Trials (PCTs)

RCTs are designed to investigate the efficacy of interventions, with the goal of determining whether a treatment could work under ideal circumstances. These trials prioritize isolating the effect of the treatment by carefully selecting participants, minimizing external factors, and controlling for potential biases. The downside of RCTs is that their strict inclusion criteria may not translate to the broad array of patients typically seen in everyday clinical settings.

Pragmatic clinical trials (PCTs) study treatments and outcomes in real-world health system practice. Most of the research projects supported by IRENE are PCTs. PCTs are important to comparative effectiveness research (CER), which compares existing health care interventions to determine what works best in routine clinical practice. An example of a PCT is "Improving High Blood Pressure in Older Adults with Multiple Chronic Diseases – The SMBP Study," which was highlighted in the Spring 2025 newsletter.



## E UPCOMING EVENTS

*Meet the IRENE team! Find our booth at these conferences and get some fun swag!*



**Iowa Physician Assistant Society Healthcare in the Heartland Conference**  
**October 20-21, 2025 • Iowa City, IA**  
[https://iapasociety.site-ym.com/events/event\\_list.asp](https://iapasociety.site-ym.com/events/event_list.asp)



**Iowa Academy of Family Physicians (IAFP) Annual Conference**  
**November 6-7, 2025 • Altoona, IA**  
[https://iapasociety.site-ym.com/events/event\\_list.asp](https://iapasociety.site-ym.com/events/event_list.asp)



**Iowa Community Health Conference**  
**November 5-7, 2025 • Des Moines, IA**  
<https://www.iowacommunityhealthconference.org/2025>



**Iowa Nurse Practitioner Society Annual Conference**  
**November 12-14, 2025 • West Des Moines, IA**  
<https://iowanpsociety.enpnetwork.com/page/36747-conference>

## C CONTACT US

Email [irene@uiowa.edu](mailto:irene@uiowa.edu) if you have any additional questions about IRENE or suggestions for future newsletter items.



Please help us save paper and postage! Provide your email address and research interests in the following short survey: [https://uiowa.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_1Ba3dWCf0nYmlJg](https://uiowa.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1Ba3dWCf0nYmlJg)



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