

## **Gulf South Clinical Trials Network Named a Spoke in the ARPA-H Customer Experience Catalyst Hub**

The Gulf South Clinical Trials Network has been named a spoke in the ARPA-H Customer Experience Hub, one of three regional hubs that comprise [ARPANET-H](#) – a nationwide health innovation network and is dedicated to the needs of people.

“It is critical that we bring innovative cancer treatments directly to the patients that need them the most, and that includes some of the most underserved communities throughout the Gulf Coast,” said Dr. Augusto Ochoa, Principal Investigator for the Gulf South Clinical Trials Network and Deputy Director of the LSU LCMC Health Cancer Center. “Being selected as a spoke enables The Gulf South Clinical Trials Network to more effectively collaborate with partners to ensure we are making an impact in the communities in which we serve.”

Less than 10% of adult cancer patients participate in cancer clinical trials in the United States. These low numbers are worse for underserved patients in impoverished areas (suburban and rural) further perpetuating a major health disparity. The National Cancer Institute has highlighted the need to find novel approaches to increase patient participation in clinical trials and access to cutting edge developments in cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment in underserved and rural areas of the country. The Gulf South Clinical Trials Network (an NCI NCORP program) is a partnership between LSU Health New Orleans, Ochsner Cancer Institute, Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center, and Feist Weiler Cancer Center (Ochsner LSU Health Shreveport). The Gulf South Clinical Trials Network has expanded access to clinical trials for patients in the Gulf South through more than 50 clinics in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

The purpose of the ARPA-H Customer Experience Hub is to ensure the active transition of health innovation in an expedient, safe, cost-effective, accessible, and sustainable manner that reaches all Americans. Together with the Stakeholder and Operations Hub and the Investor Catalyst Hub, these hubs and spokes create the ARPANET-H nationwide health innovation network.

The ARPA-H Customer Experience Hub, which has 284 spokes, provides a variety of services and capabilities to the government and to participating spokes. These include design services, rapid prototyping, stakeholder and ecosystem engagement, teaming and partnership opportunities, and regulatory support. The primary goal of the Customer Experience Hub is to make vital health innovations accessible to everyone, with a focus on traditionally underrepresented populations. Integrating patient feedback throughout the research and development process with the goal of ensuring that innovations will be widely adopted to effectively meet patients' needs is a main strategy of the hub.

For more information about the Customer Experience Hub and its initiatives, visit [www.customerexperiencehub.org](http://www.customerexperiencehub.org).

### **About the Gulf South Clinical Trials Network**

Formed in 2018, the Gulf South Clinical Trials Network is part of an NCORP grant funded by the National Cancer Institute to reach all cancer patients in Louisiana and surrounding states, but especially those in minority and underserved communities. This experienced network of four leading health care and research groups in the region — LSU Health New Orleans, Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center, Ochsner Cancer Institute, and Feist Weiler Cancer Center (Ochsner LSU Health Shreveport) - works to improve patient outcomes by expanding access to

prevention and treatment studies as well as community outreach and education programs. Through additional partnerships with other health providers across the Gulf South, we offer these vital resources at more than 40 locations. This has doubled the number of sites offering clinical trials in the Gulf South, allowing more patients and physicians access to cutting edge cancer treatments.