

# Successful Recruitment of Cancer Patients from an Urban Cancer Center



## Background

The Cancer Health Literacy Study (CHLS) was a NIH/NCI funded R01 research study to develop a new measure of cancer health literacy.

The goal was to recruit 1300 cancer patients and have 50 participants retake the test in 2 weeks and an additional 50 retake the test in 6 months.

Interviews were conducted in-person, lasted an hour, and participants were compensated \$25.

Research staff identified participants through medical record review, attending tumor board meetings, advertising in clinic waiting rooms, and via community events.

## Results

**N= 1,306** Cancer patients were consented over a period of 12 months. Of those N=1,306 participants, **n=164** returned for a retest interview.

## Successful Strategies

### Minimize clinic disruption

- Reach out to **all** individuals and groups that may be impacted by the research study
  - Participants often seek information about the study from non-clinical sources like hospital libraries, information desks, or volunteer groups
- Alert (and periodically remind) staff at the entrances of the study, to make it easier for participants to find research staff
- Meet individually with nurses and support staff to provide contact information so they can direct patient questions to your study staff

### Engage the clinic

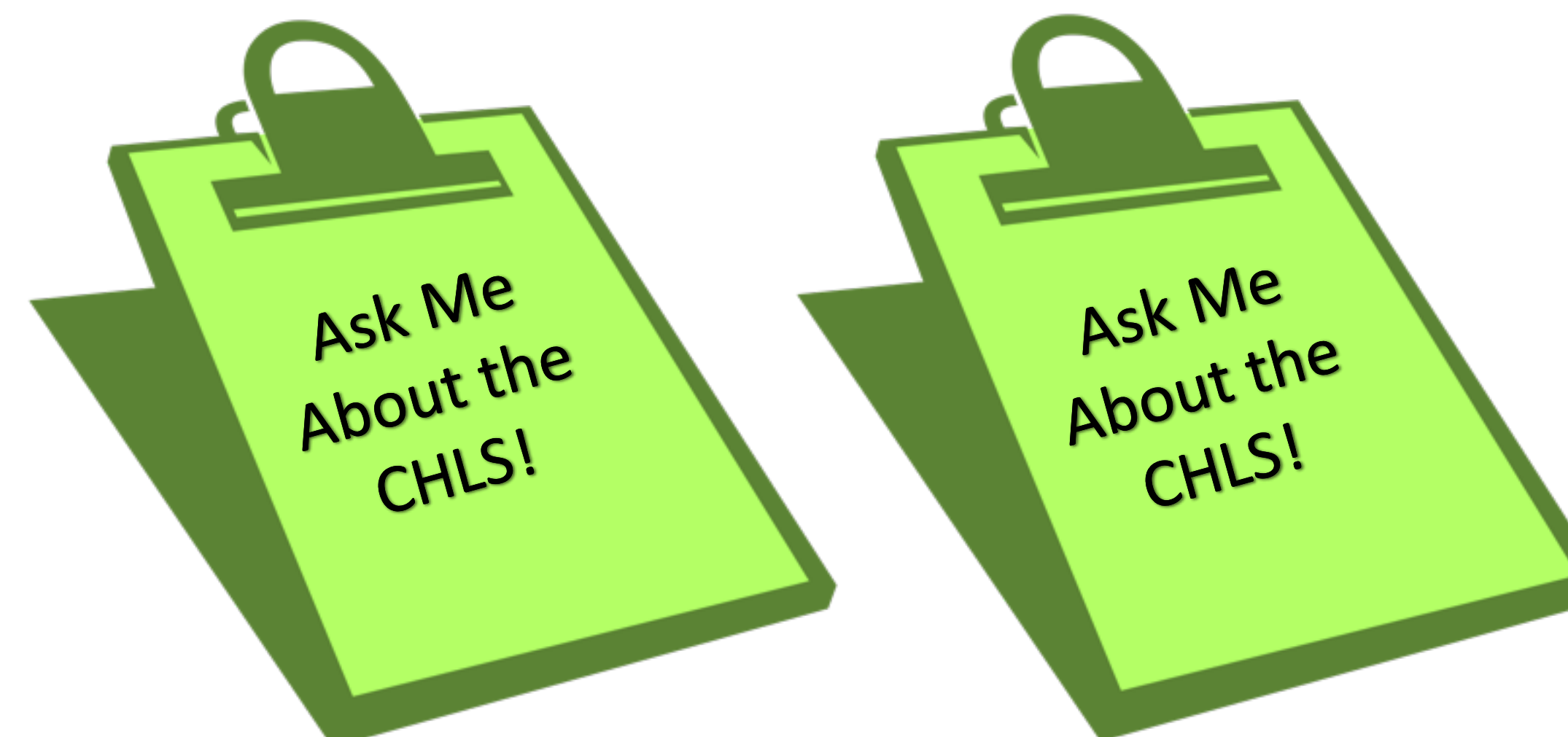
- Find one or more oncologists to champion the study with colleagues
- Present the study at all relevant tumor board meetings
- Attend meetings and provide updates to keep medical staff engaged

### Make the experience uncomplicated and pleasant for participants

- Always put the patient first – no study is as important as the patient's welfare
- Anticipate when possible and be flexible and accommodating
- Use simple language with clear next step instructions in recruitment letters
- Make reminder phone calls the day prior to scheduled interviews and establish a firm plan to find each other in the clinic
- When possible, schedule interviews around existing clinic appointments
  - When scheduling, make note of special considerations such as mobility concerns or if the participant will have a family member waiting

### Brand your study

- Ensure all signage is consistent and provide clear contact information
- This study used neon colored clipboards that read, "Ask me about the CHLS!" with the interviewers' name on the back. This makes identifying study staff easy for participants as well as hospital staff who may be assisting patients.



V I R G I N I A C O M M O N W E A L T H U N I V E R S I T Y



**VCU**

Laura Cartwright, Ph.D. & Robin Matsuyama, Ph.D.  
Department of Health Behavior and Policy