



**CASE STUDY:**  
**Infectious Disease**

## **COVID-19 VACCINE DEVELOPMENT**

Global Pharmaceutical  
Company Sought to Recruit  
African Americans to Ensure  
a Representative Patient  
Population for a U.S. COVID-19  
Vaccine Trial

 **trialbee**

## Challenge:

A global pharmaceutical company wanted to enroll representative cohorts of diverse populations in support of its work to develop a vaccine for COVID-19 in the United States. Faced with poor enrollment among non-white patients (only 24% of total enrollees), recruitment and enrollment activity was paused in August of 2020. This was due to the sponsor's difficulty in meeting their goal of matching overall population demographics of healthy volunteers as closely as possible with U.S. Census data. Specifically, they sought a population that was approximately 13.4% African American.

As of August 2020, the sponsor's existing recruitment vendor partners had not been able to produce a satisfactorily diverse group of enrollees. Trialbee was brought in to improve diversity of study participants across 100 trial sites. Overall, the sponsor was looking for 2,500 healthy African American volunteers who were over 18 and were at higher-than-average risk of contracting COVID-19 (due to location, underlying medical conditions, age, etc.).

## Solution:

Trialbee worked quickly to map specific demographic data along with Social Determinants of Health data to identify select zip codes where eligible volunteers could be found. They then identified those outreach channels – online, through social media, and programmatic media – that had the highest rates of engagement among African Americans in those zip codes.

Collaborating with other recruitment vendors

## Study Overview:

- In the race to develop a safe, effective COVID-19 vaccine, a global pharmaceutical company needed to recruit a more representative and diverse group of study participants
- Traditional recruitment techniques had produced too few enrollees from non-white demographics
- True population representation is vital for an effective vaccine meant to deal with a wide-spread public health crisis
- The sponsor voluntarily paused recruitment to ensure that the trial had adequate representation from specific demographics

## Outcome:

- Trialbee collaborated with the sponsor and their other recruitment vendors to develop and execute an inclusive strategy that benefitted all stakeholders
- Trialbee went to work quickly to develop messages and channels for reaching African American volunteers
- Referral pacing at the rate of 25 patients/site/month and randomizations at the rate of 5 p/s/m
- 2 months after pausing enrollment due to poor representation, the sponsor reached their enrollment diversity goals
- The sponsor's COVID-19 vaccine would go on to gain FDA approval

engaged by the sponsor, Trialbee deployed targeted messaging that resonated with the African American audiences. They then optimized the messaging channels and tactics to deliver ads in the right places and at the right times to ensure that potential study recruits received the information needed to make informed decisions about research participation.

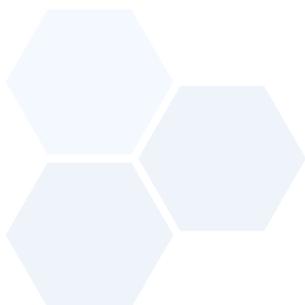
## Outcomes:

Trialbee's strategy worked quickly to generate improved referrals at a rate of 25 p/s/m and randomizations of 5 p/s/m.

Along with over 10 other recruitment partners, Trialbee worked rapidly to speed up the enrollment of patients representative of US demographics

After pausing all recruitment and enrollment activities in August 2020, Trialbee helped the sponsor to reach its enrollment representation goals just two months later. The vaccine would go on to receive FDA approval for emergency use shortly thereafter in December 2020.

For more information  
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