

# Study analyzes impact of clinical trials in Wisconsin

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A new report shows more than 2,000 clinical trials of new medicines have been conducted in Wisconsin since 1999 or currently are under way, including 119 in Marshfield.

The Pharmaceutical [Research](#) and Manufacturers of America report shows clinical trials "are good not only for patients, but for the state's economy and for science," said Jeff Trehitt, PhRMA spokesman and an author of the [study](#). PhRMA is the national trade association for biopharmaceutical [companies](#).

More than half of the state's 2,000 clinical trials targeted chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes and mental illnesses, the study found.

"We need more medications for those conditions," Trehitt said. "That's a constructive development."

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PhRMA has conducted the same report in nine other states so far, and plans to complete 10 more by

the end of the year. Of the reports completed, Ohio, Massachusetts and New York top the list, with Wisconsin ranking "solidly in the middle," Trehitt said.

"There's a solid research infrastructure in Wisconsin," he said.

The strengths of the Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation's program are in cancer, neuroscience, cardiovascular and vaccine research, said Dr. Steven Yale, the foundation's director of clinical research.

"We're proud of the work that we've done," Yale said.

Other central Wisconsin medical institutions that have conducted clinical trials include Aspirus Regional Cancer Center in Wausau and Riverview Hospital in Wisconsin Rapids, according to the study.

Biopharmaceutical research is a boon for the state's economy, supporting more than 43,000 jobs throughout Wisconsin in 2008, according to a study by Archstone Consulting.

Clinical trials account for 45 to 75 percent of the \$1.2 billion average cost of developing one new, cutting-edge biotechnology medicine, the PhRMA study said.

"It's a good, steady source of revenue for these local institutions," Trehitt said.

Marshfield Clinic's research center employs nearly 60 people, and was even hiring during the recession, Yale noted. The center recently added six new clinical research coordinators, said Kristin Martinez, clinical research administrator.

One challenge: More than 70 percent of clinical trials have problems recruiting participants, which can delay trials several months, Trehitt said. That stat is about 10 or 15 percent in Marshfield, Yale said.

"Historically, we've been very successful in enrolling patients," Yale said, with some studies involving as many as 20,000 patients.

A trial delay can slow drug development and approval, which means patients aren't getting medications "when they need them," Trehitt said.

"It's very important to have greater awareness and understanding of local community (clinical) trials," he said.

To that end, a mix of health care businesses, industry groups and medical research organizations have formed the Clinical Trials Education Network of Wisconsin. Martinez planned to announce the formation of the network, which includes the Marshfield Clinic Applied Sciences division, during a press conference discussing the clinical trials report today in Madison.

The network's mission is to educate policymakers, physicians and patients about clinical trials, and to connect pharmaceutical companies with research

organizations, Martinez said. The network should increase clinical trial efficiency, reduce costs and help bring new treatments to the general public.

The network also seeks to attract innovative companies to Wisconsin, Yale said.

"This is a means to publicize partners willing to make collaborations" in clinical trials, Martinez said.

There are currently 12 chronic disease-related clinical trials recruiting patients in Marshfield. To search for clinical trials seeking participants, visit [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov).

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