

"We've plans to open Thailand and Malaysia chapters"

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-Thomas Adams, President & CEO, Association of Clinical Research Professionals (ACRP)

Thomas Adams was named CEO of the Association of Clinical Research Professionals (ACRP) in 2002. In 2005, he was given additional title of the President of ACRP. Active in a number of associations Adams has served as an officer and director of the American Association of Medical Society Executives and has held a number of appointed positions including US Department of Health and Human Services Secretary's Advisory Committee on Human Research Protections, the Hawaii Convention and Visitors Bureau Advisory Committee, Chairman of the Governor's (WI) Advisory Committee on Health Insurance for Uninsured (SACHRP).

During the launch of ACRP Singapore Chapter, in an interview with BioSpectrum, he shares the objectives and benefits of the Association. Some excerpts:

Why is ACRP keen on opening a chapter in South East Asia in general and Singapore in particular?

According to market analysts, by 2008, up to 30 percent of global clinical trials will take place outside of US and Europe. India and South East Asia are the favored places for those trials to take place. Even the pharma companies have increasingly been outsourcing their clinical trials to other parts of the world and no other region gets as much of it as Asia.

Even in a recent report by PricewaterhouseCoopers that surveyed pharma executives in nine Asian countries 58 percent of the respondents expect Asia to lead the global pharmaceutical market shift. At the same time professionals joining ACRP, from countries other than US represent the fastest growing segment of our membership, and has already crossed over 3,000. Keeping in view the demand, we began to look for a partner to open chapter for Asia Pacific region back in 2004.

Singapore has been emerging as a hub for early stage clinical trials. The implications for employment in the region are significant especially as the country has established itself as a center for clinical trial oversight in Asia. The job market looks promising in this space. Through the development of a chapter we wish to participate in Singapore achieving its share of this goal. At the same time, in near future, we have plans to open chapters in Thailand and Malaysia as well.

What is ACRP?

The Association of Clinical Research Professionals (ACRP), a voluntary organization, is a primary resource for clinical research professionals in the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device industries, as those in hospital, academic medical centers and physician office settings. ACRP was founded in 1976 to address the educational and networking needs of research nurses and others who supported the work of clinical investigations. Now, it is a global association of 21,000 individuals who are engaged in the performance of clinical trials on human beings.

The ACRP is responsible for interaction and management of over 50 of its global chapters and forums to provide assistance and service to the chairs and their members and assist with the development of new chapters and forums. It organizes and host chapter officers' workshop and forum educational and networking programs at the annual global conference and exhibition. It is responsible for managing all ACRP business relationships with current and potential global business partners and collaborators. It recently started its Singapore chapter in association with Bilcare Research.

What kind of activities ACRP undertakes for the benefit of its members?

The association conducts examination for certification for the clinical researchers. Besides certification, the association monitors the evolving field of clinical research, identifies knowledge requirements of the clinical professionals worldwide and develops educational programs to support the field. The programs include opportunities for learning in the classroom through seminars, workshop, conferences, and good clinical practices (GCP) courses, learning through online clinical and leadership courses, participating in webinars with expert instructors and so on.

What are the benefits of doing ACRP certification program?

A certification is the formal recognition of clinical research professionals who have met professional eligibility requirements and demonstrated a baseline level of job-related knowledge and skills. We believe certification can benefit the public through ensuring the development and preservation of the highest quality and standards in clinical research.

The other intangible benefits of taking up the certification by a professional is that there will be fewer errors, lower costs, rapid turnaround and greater safety while conducting the trials. Even the feedback from the pharmaceutical companies has been the same on the certification. We believe it is through ACRP certification that global standards of knowledge of clinical trials can be demonstrated.

As of now how many professionals hold ACRP certification?

Since 1992, ACRP has been a leading certifier of clinical research professionals. More than 18,000 professionals hold a designation such as: ACRP certified clinical research coordinator, clinical research associate, physician investigator, or non-

physician
investigator.

To help the candidates prepare for the FDA, ICH and European certification exam, ACRP offers classroom-based Certification Exam Review courses, as well as online practice exams and prep packages.