

Unlocking Clinical Trial Site Capacity:

Applying Lessons from Provincial Strategies and Pan-Canadian Initiatives



The webinar explored how **Canada’s clinical research ecosystem** can leverage digital tools, harmonized strategies, and inclusive recruitment to rebuild its global competitiveness. Despite strong assets—diverse populations, advanced AI expertise, and efficient Health Canada review timelines—fragmentation and limited site capacity continue to challenge national performance in clinical research.

Canada’s Strengths and Gaps

Strengths: Canada leads the G7 in clinical trials per capita, is home to 10% of the world’s top AI researchers, and benefits from a diverse population (30% visible minorities, 5% Indigenous) and competitive Health Canada review timelines.

Challenges: Fragmented digital infrastructure, complex ethics and privacy approvals, concentration of research in urban areas, and low sponsored trial counts.

Pan-Canadian Initiatives

Key programs include 3CTN’s CRAFT (building capacity with decentralized trials), CanReview (national single ethics review), ACT Consortium Canada (connecting researchers), N2 (researcher and patient resources), and Innovative Medicines Canada (policy advocacy).

Site-Level Strategy

Sites should leverage registries, adopt digital tools (eSource, DCT), and maintain pre-consented databases for recruitment accuracy. Use Sciteline’s Site Capacity Scorecard to assess readiness, and then start small, and scale sustainably.

Provincial Innovations

Clinical Trials Ontario (CTO): CTO Stream—Canada’s first, single ethics review system—and the QuickSTART program work towards reducing site activation timelines from 90 to 45 days. The ARCHi Initiative focuses on supporting community hospitals in building research capacity.

NovaStudies Connect (Nova Scotia): A patient-centered clinical trials platform **powered by Sciteline**. It supports over 350 active trials and connects patients, researchers, and health systems through integrated recruitment, registry, eSource, and DCT tools—driving engagement, insights, and capacity building. A scalable model for Canada.

RITHIM (Manitoba): The Harmony platform consolidates ethics, privacy, and institutional reviews, going from 25 applications to 1 per study.

Decentralized Model

Decentralized Clinical Trials (DCTs) can increase accessibility and therefore enrollment and retention. The Canadian CRAFT model, adapted from the Australasian Teletrial Program, uses a hub-and-spoke structure to expand site capacity and patient reach.

Building a Connected Future

Canada’s opportunity lies in harmonizing systems and empowering collaboration. Staying connected with national networks, supporting research professionals, and sustaining digital adoption are key to strengthening Canada’s leadership in clinical research.



Discover how Sciteline supports patients, researchers, and health systems in building research capacity through a connected digital infrastructure at:

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