

Serving Patients by Serving the Sites

Takeda Puts Patients and Sites at the Center

For Takeda, evolving the way they work with clinical research sites wasn't optional — it was essential. The company recognized that relying too heavily on outsourcing was damaging their relationship with sites, slowing progress, and limiting their ability to deliver treatments to patients faster. The answer was clear: **take greater accountability** for their own studies and strengthen direct relationships with sites.

This shift required more than new processes — it demanded a culture change. As **Sean Cunningham, Regional Director on the Study Site Engagement Team** from Takeda put it:

"It's not sites vs. sponsors vs. CROs. It's all of us against the diseases we're fighting."

Takeda's Study Site Engagement team adopted the mantra: **"Serve the patients by serving the sites."** That perspective now guides decisions across their global team of 49, supporting research in more than 50 countries.

A Dedicated Function for Site Engagement

To support this new way of working, Takeda created a Clinical Site Start-Up and Engagement team focused on reviewing and improving the areas most critical to successful clinical trials:

- Site Payments – streamlining payment models to make participation more sustainable for sites.
- Site Engagement – helping sites navigate participation on Takeda trials **AND** fostering long-term relationships that extend beyond individual studies.
- Patient Recruitment and Retention – developing strategies that help sites reach and keep participants engaged.

- Site Start-Up (Budgeting & Contracting) – reducing delays through improved processes, templates, and use of master agreements.
- Feasibility – ensuring site capabilities and infrastructure are aligned early to trial needs.
- Trial Equity & Representation – incorporating diversity considerations from the outset to improve patient access and trial outcomes.

All of this is guided by a simple principle at Takeda: Patient. Trust. Reputation. Business. — in that order.

Driving a Culture Shift

The transformation started with a simple expectation: *everyone in the organization must be site accessible*. What does that mean? At Takeda, it means leaders and executives had to be exposed directly to site experiences, often through events like SCRS Summits, where Takeda teams could listen and act on feedback in real time.

The results of this approach have been tangible. At SCRS Global Site Solutions Summit in 2024, Takeda hosted a symposium to gather site feedback. That feedback was compiled, shared internally, and used to inform changes to Takeda processes. Headed into the 2025 Global Summit, Takeda is able to return to the Summit and share back with sites the improvements made based on their input — turning listening into action.

Building Tools for Long-Term Partnership

Site feedback has not only shaped Takeda's culture but also their tools and processes. Examples include:

- **We Connect**, a platform where sites can share their information and trial interest areas, managed by patient recruitment and retention teams and routed to study engagement teams.
- Improvements to **master agreements**, streamlining CDAs, contracts and reducing cycle times.
- Evolving **site payment processes** based directly on what sites identified as barriers.
- A shift toward gathering **feedback earlier in protocol development**, reducing costly amendments later.

Importantly, Takeda's strategic focus has extended beyond supporting sites for individual studies. They are investing in long-term partnerships, responding to feedback that sites want consistent sponsor support, not just study-specific interactions.

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Engaging and Supporting New Sites

Takeda also prioritizes helping new sites get started in clinical research. A risk-based approach ensures they can onboard quickly while maintaining quality. Site visits - even outside of a study context - allow Takeda teams to see infrastructure, assess staff knowledge and passion firsthand, and capture insights that feasibility questionnaires can't provide.

Data-driven analysis supports site selection, drawing on therapeutic area performance and infrastructure indicators rather than relying solely on prior Takeda experience. This approach expands opportunities for sites while ensuring Takeda feels confident in their choices.

Continuous Improvement Through Collaboration

Takeda's Study Site Engagement team acts as a connector for more than 1,500 global sites on active clinical trials across the portfolio (excluding vaccines), ensuring site feedback is delivered to the right people internally and used to improve processes.

By listening to sites, acting on their input, and engaging them as long-term partners, Takeda continues to refine its approach. The result is not only stronger relationships but also more efficient operations that bring treatments to patients faster.



Collaborate Forward Takeaways

- **Culture matters:** Creating a mindset where everyone is site accessible ensures the organization remains grounded in patient and site needs.
- **Dedicated site engagement:** Focused teams support critical areas like payments, contracts, recruitment, feasibility, and trial equity.
- **Listening must lead to action:** Sharing back changes based on site feedback builds trust and strengthens partnerships.
- **Tools shaped by feedback:** Platforms like We Connect and improvements to contracts and payments reflect site priorities.
- **Support beyond the study:** Long-term partnerships signal to sites that Takeda is invested in their success, not just individual trials.
- **New site engagement:** Risk-based onboarding, site visits, and data-driven analysis open doors for new contributors to clinical research.



The Collaborate Forward Team

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Let's keep moving forward. **Together.**

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