CASE STUDY GABRAIL CANCER CENTER

Gabrail Cancer Center Streamlines Trials and Cuts Inventory Waste Using Slope

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SLOPE | Gabrail

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CUSTOMER PROFILE

Gabrail Cancer Center is a nationally renowned research facility in Ohio that currently supports about 90 active oncology trials, ranging from Phase I to Phase IV.

Gabrail

- Canton, Ohio
- 90 oncology trials
- Phase I–IV

The Challenge

Ask Gabrail Cancer Center's Chief Operations Officer, Carrie Smith, to sum up her facility's experience with clinical inventory management before Slope in one word, and without hesitation she'll answer: "Awful."

Gabrail's descent into inventory-related disarray was years in the making. Shortly after she joined Gabrail in 1998, Smith and the cancer center's founder, Dr. Nashat Gabrail, saw remarkable value in providing their patients with access to oncology trials so that they could take advantage of cutting-edge therapies throughout the entire course of their treatment. After initially supporting a few phase III and vaccine trials, Gabrail expanded its research program to include early-phase trials across dozens of different cancer types.

Gabrail was making a name for itself in clinical research, but a problem was brewing behind the scenes. As the cancer center's trial pipeline and patient volume continued to grow, trial complexity was becoming the norm across the industry. Each study that Gabrail initiated came with its own set of lab kits, its own set of bulk supplies, and its own set of solutions — but the amount of inventory that it had to manage grew exponentially in response to complicated kitting schemes and higher patient recruitment. Old systems and strategies — which used to be adequate for managing clinical inventory when site staff were only overseeing a few simplistic trials — were becoming increasingly ineffective.

Without a digital system to centralize and maintain inventory data, Gabrail staff relied on siloed and inconsistent processes for tracking on-hand supply quantities and expiration dates across dozens of trials. Some study coordinators would record information on sticky notes and paper, while others would maintain an Excel spreadsheet on their personal desktop. In nearly all cases, staff members did not have visibility or access to anyone else's inventory data except for the data that they maintained themselves,

making it nearly impossible for site staff to keep tabs on clinical supplies that they didn't order or place in storage. Without an ability to easily monitor lab kit expirations, it was also challenging to keep track of when to discard unusable supplies and when to place a resupply order.

> **Our goal was to make our clinical trials successful for our pharma partners and our staff by making processes as efficient, detailed, and error-free as possible. We want to be known by pharma companies and CROs as being very organized, efficient, prompt, and accurate at doing trials, while also enabling cost savings for both pharma and CROs.**

For several years, the cancer center attempted to utilize a paper-based filing system for resupply order forms and inventory-related documents, but site staff were simply too busy to properly maintain it. Study coordinators would forget to create records or place them in the proper binders — and when they did file away inventory collateral, these binders would become chock-full of disorganized paperwork. Oftentimes it would take staff members hours to locate a single piece of paper. In some cases multiple people would get pulled into the search for a single record, which only exacerbated the strain on Gabrail's resources. This inefficient process became especially apparent during monitoring visits, when it would take CRAs several hours to sift through inventory-related paperwork.

Overwhelmed by the constant onslaught of lab kits that were being shipped their way, study coordinators would have to haphazardly sort through boxes and shelves that spanned several storage rooms in order to locate clinical supplies. Sometimes Gabrail staff would reorder items that they already had in stock, simply because they didn't know they had them. Other times the cancer center would initiate a patient visit, only to find that their visit-specific lab kits for a particular study were all expired or out of stock. Site staff would then have to piece together their own lab kit, or otherwise request a lab kit to be expedited from the sponsor's kitting vendor. In a worst case scenario, Gabrail would have to turn away or reschedule patients due to insufficient inventory.

Ultimately, Gabrail's inventory dysfunction had a sizable impact on resource utilization. Carrie Smith estimates that the cancer center would discard **at least 50% of its lab kits across all of its trials.** The facility's paper-based, decentralized processes also manifested themselves in the form of several hours of precious staff time wasted each week. Efforts that could have been dedicated to pre-screening sick patients, entering data into the EDC, and other critical study tasks, instead had to be allocated for managing clinical supplies.

50% of lab kits discarded across all clinical studies

The Solution

Carrie Smith knew that Gabrail needed to evaluate its unreliable and inefficient processes for managing clinical inventory. When she found that there was a lack of consistency in how inventory was managed and a dependency on paper, she considered ways to optimize the cancer center's current processes through centralized spreadsheets, standardized templates, or better record-keeping — but instead of reinventing the wheel, she opted to explore digital solutions that would streamline their inventory management processes.

> We found that *technology* was one of the things that we needed to implement to make ourselves more efficient and enable cost savings for us and our pharma partners.

During a routine Internet search, Smith discovered Slope's inventory management solution. Slope's software gives clinical research sites a quick snapshot into the clinical inventory that they have on site, where it's stored, and when it expires. Using a centralized system, site staff can abandon their inefficient manual processes, error-prone written logs, and shared spreadsheets in order to dramatically improve their operations, organize their facilities, and drastically reduce clinical supply waste. As an innovative organization, Gabrail wanted to assess the utility of Slope as a digital solution to their inventory problem.

"One of the Best Systems I've Seen": Qualifying Slope's Impact on Gabrail's Inventory Management

Upon deploying Slope across their organization in 2018, Gabrail saw immediate improvements to its operations across its entire clinical trial portfolio.

Hours in time savings each week for site staff

Standard tasks like locating lab kits and paper records used to squander several hours of Gabrail staff time each week. Once Gabrail entered their lab kits and other clinical supplies into Slope's inventory management solution, site staff's visibility to their inventory dramatically improved. Rather than relying on paper and spreadsheets to haphazardly piece together what supplies they had on hand, where they were located, and when they expired, study coordinators were able to easily filter clinical inventory by protocol, kit type, and unexpired-versus-expired inventory in a matter of seconds — saving the entire staff *countless hours* on tracking down supplies, identifying expired inventory, and determining when to reorder supplies.

> Slope has more features and is more user-friendly than I anticipated. We are able to accomplish all of our goals by using the platform. The customer service is also phenomenal. Whether it's through an email or a phone call, the whole team is always happy to answer any questions that we have, or to guide us through any support that we need.

A 20-30% reduction in waste

Without a centralized process for monitoring clinical inventory, Gabrail struggled to track expiration dates — resulting in at least 50% of their lab kits going unutilized and inducing excess ordering that would have otherwise been preventable.

With Slope, Gabrail saw a **roughly 20–30% decrease in supply waste across all of their studies** — a significant achievement that led to better utilization of storage space and less time spent sorting through expired inventory.

20-30% less supply waste across all studies with Slope

Improved collaboration with study stakeholders

When Gabrail centralized and monitored its inventory in Slope's digital platform, collaboration between study coordinators became a breeze. If one staff member was out on vacation or occupied with another task, all of their inventory data was housed in the Slope platform, making it easily accessible to all stakeholders. It also became much easier for Gabrail to pull reports and proactively identify data trends around on-hand inventory and kit expirations. The cancer center was not only able to use this data to facilitate conversations with study sponsors and kitting vendors in order to curb lab kit waste, but it was also able to demonstrate a commitment to working with sponsors more efficiently. Data insights from the Slope platform have also streamlined Gabrail's entire monitoring process so that staff members can hand a CRA a Slope-generated report that captures lab kit use and other important inventory data.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Unlike most clinical trial tech, Slope's free inventory management platform was built by and for site staff, and can be implemented across all studies, sponsors, and research sites
- Slope streamlines clinical research site processes and eliminates the need for paperwork and spreadsheets
- Slope enables sites to manage inventory and samples free of charge in one centralized platform for managing lab kits, bulk supplies, devices, IP, and more
- Slope also offers Biospecimen360™, a biospecimen lifecycle software for sponsors that supports sites' inventory management and sample management workflows

CASE STUDY CONTRIBUTER

Carrie Smith, R.N. began her oncology career in 1998 as an oncology nurse at Gabrail Cancer Center. The following year, she realized that access to clinical trials should be the preferred standard of care for all cancer patients. Carrie was instrumental in building a comprehensive clinical trial unit at GCC, starting from scratch and culminating in one of the highest-enrolling sites per physician, as well as the highest retention rate. Carrie, as the Chief Operations Officer of the cancer center, oversees, at any given time, an average of eighty actively recruiting clinical trials that are mostly phase 1 and phase 2. Later in her career, she established an SMO, Sargon Research, to help community oncology practices open a research program in their practice. She has been responsible for the annual Sargon Summit for the last nine years; the event is hosted in Canton, OH, at the Pro Football Hall of Fame for research professionals from CROs, Sponsors, and Research Sites nationwide. Understanding the needs of oncology practices, she is also the Executive Director of Innovative Community Oncology Practices (ICOP), launched in 2021 to help practices maintain their independence.

Her experience and acquired knowledge has put her in the national spotlight as a leader in cancer research. Pharmaceutical companies and regulators often seek her opinion about issues of patient accrual, clinical trial design, and the FDA approval process. She is a consultant and a speaker for many pharmaceutical companies, mainly on newly approved drugs, where GCC has been instrumental in the conduct of clinical trials. She has published over a dozen abstracts for various magazines and societies, including the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS). She is an active member of the Oncology Nursing Society and the Association of Clinical Research Practitioners.

SLOPE

Slope is a global provider of biospecimen lifecycle software, data, and services for clinical trials. With a focus on tech-enabling the full biospecimen lifecycle, Slope offers expertise that empowers sponsors to make informed decisions using high-quality, real-time sample data. Slope has supported thousands of the most complex, sample-intensive trials worldwide and has been adopted by nearly 80% of NCI-designated cancer centers.

For more information, visit SlopeClinical.com.

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Biospecimen Lifecycle Software

SlopeClinical.com/request-demo