

# CLINICAL-TRIAL DEAL SUCCEEDING

Agreement called 'win-win' for patients, researchers

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With about 100 doctors and roughly 100,000 patients, Colorado Springs Health Partners reaches a broad swath of the Pikes Peak region. A partnership between CSHP and Tempe, Ariz.-based Clinical Research Advantage is putting that reach to use in clinical research.

Traditionally, new drugs undergo human trials at independent testing centers. CRA's model, used in 23 sites across the West, puts its clinical coordinators and

drug trials in ordinary doctors' offices instead. That arrangement makes recruitment easier, since the doctors have established relationships with their patients, and means that the trials have extensive medical histories for the subjects, said Mark Hanley, CRA's CEO.

"What makes you successful doing clinical trials is if you can enroll patients in the trials," Hanley said. "The national average is fairly low. We meet or exceed our enrollment goal over 90 percent of the time — that

has to do with our model."

CSHP and CRA began the agreement in two CSHP offices in October, and plan to expand to several more locations this year. It's already been a success — CSHP's East branch was CRA's top location in enrolling subjects for a child-flu-vaccine study last year.

"The only reason we're in Colorado Springs is because we had an opportunity to work with a well-known, established large group with a great reputation," Hanley

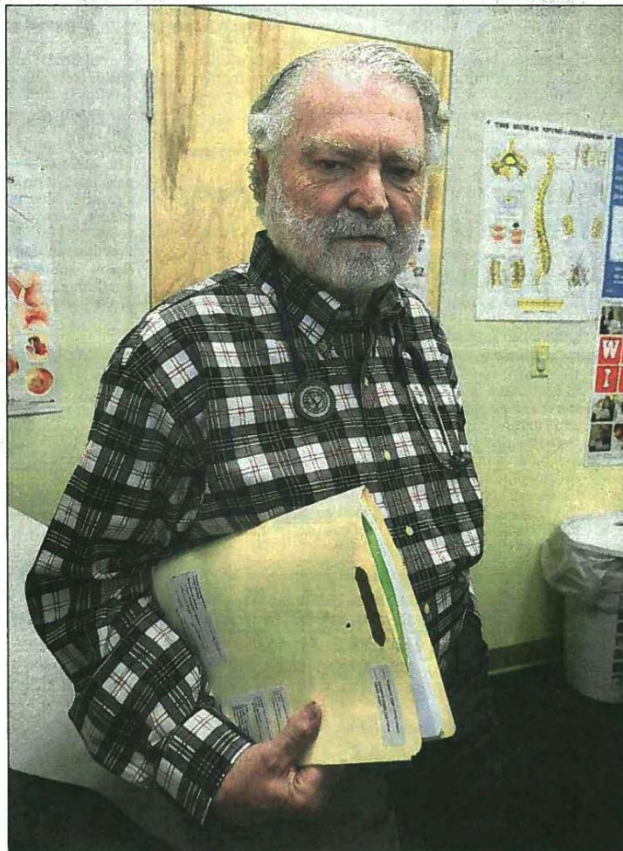
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DR. JOHN SPEER — OVERSEES CSHP'S CLINICAL RESEARCH FOR CLINICAL RESEARCH ADVANTAGE



JERILEE BENNETT, THE GAZETTE  
Dr. John Speer oversees Colorado Springs Health Partners' clinical research for Clinical Research Advantage, which conducts drug trials in some CSHP offices.

## CSHP: Patients hear of benefits but aren't pressured, doc says

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said.

CSHP already had a clinical trials department, but it was centralized. Getting coordinators out into physicians' offices has given the program a boost, said Dr. John Speer, who oversees CSHP's clinical research for CRA.

"Patients are much more interested in studies if their own doctor says, 'I think this could benefit you,'" Speer said.

It's important to note, he added, that doctors can't push patients into trials and that patients can quit at any time.

"While we can tell them about the advantages of a study, it's really important we don't persuade them," Speer said.

For patients, signing up for a study can mean access to a new and improved drug — although the studies

are double-blind, meaning no one knows whether the patient is getting the new drug or an existing treatment. Patients can also benefit through free tests and care for the trials, which can sometimes pay off in detecting other problems, and, sometimes, payment.

"It's a win-win, really," said CSHP physician Kari Uusinarkaus.

For some patients, the attraction is simply helping out.

"Some people are really interested in advancing medical science and you don't have to ask them again," Uusinarkaus said.

CRA's Hanley said he's put all four of his own children in flu-vaccine studies.

"I know the process, I know what it entails," he said. "I would never take a chance on the safety of my children."

Call the writer at 636-0275.