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Clinical ancillary supply management

Streamlining ancillary supplies and the investigator experience

A program-based approach to solve the challenges of ancillary supply management

The challenge

Our client, a top 25 global pharmaceutical company, came to Thermo Fisher Scientific requesting support for a complex global program encompassing 15 studies across 53 countries over 1,000 sites and for over 12,000 patients. In order to supply the program, the team needed to order over 350 unique items including equipment, consumables and materials. Currently individual clinical project managers at the client were attempting to obtain the supplies themselves. No standard process or service approach existed for the team. As a result, there were no consistencies across any of the trials and no efficiencies could be realized. Furthermore, due to the lack of proactive planning often huge volumes of materials were arriving to supply the sites, overwhelming the staff and compromising supply space available on site. In some cases, materials were no longer needed and required pick up.

The solution

The Thermo Fisher Scientific team developed a solution that managed the program of studies as a whole. A dedicated Ancillary Clinical Supply Chain Manager was assigned to lead the project to consolidate the complete list of supplies from across the studies in order to leverage any volumes to gain a pricing advantage. In addition, Thermo Fisher Scientific developed a web-based, country and study specific system to provide on line ordering for the sites and to support overall inventory management.

At program implementation, a user manual was sent to each site and training was given to all staff. Thermo Fisher Scientific teams established thresholds, sent an initial start up set of supplies to each site and then worked to resupply them on an as needed or on-demand basis. A 24/7 help desk was established as an additional resource for the client and the staff. The Ancillary Clinical Supply Chain Manager also took into consideration any expiry considerations and developed a plan for equipment return and reissue that could be managed and tracked centrally.

Feedback from the client and investigator sites was very positive. The newly defined single point of contact for the client and sites drove efficiencies for the program and allowed the client clinical managers to redirect their efforts to the higher value clinical concerns of the trial. Consolidating the supplier vendors drove efficiencies in supply, resupply and in pricing. The IT support allowed the client to track shipments, view inventory levels, and trigger alerts for resupplies. The investigator sites reported a higher level of satisfaction. They were able to access support, request training materials and focus on driving enrollment targets, patient treatment and tracking.

Ultimately, our solution helped the client achieve the dual goals of on time delivery and assurance of supply. The additional support from the import and export professionals at Thermo Fisher Scientific contributed to delivering the correct materials when and where they were needed in order to support trial conduct.

Program overview

The newly defined single point of contact for the client and sites drove efficiencies for the program.

- 15 Protocols
- 53 Countries
- 1,009 sites
- 12,731 patients
- 350 unique supply items including equipment, consumables, and materials
- Averaged 280 orders per month