

SoCRA Chapters: Do you have one near you?

Submitted by Kathi Durdon, NYS SoCRA Chapter Chair and Cathy McDonald, SoCRA National Capital Area Chapter, 2005 - 2009

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Did you know that SoCRA has over 50 Chapters in the US, Canada, and Japan?

What can a Chapter do for you?

Well, if you're a certified clinical research professional, a SoCRA Chapter can be a great regional resource for maintaining your re-certification through SoCRA-provided education credits. You also have an opportunity to network with colleagues in your area to share expertise, process and maybe even job opportunities.

What if you don't have a Chapter in your area?

Establishing a Chapter is easy. First, contact the Administrative Director at the SoCRA office (800-762-7292, SoCRAmail@aol.com) to get details on how to set up a SoCRA Chapter. The SoCRA Chapter policies and procedures will be sent to you for your review. Essentially, all you need to do is coordinate an education program, let SoCRA membership in your area know about it (the SoCRA office will send out an email for you) and you're a Chapter!

There are a few details you need to know:

- You cannot collect any funding to support your Chapter. But that means being a Chapter member is free, there are no dues and if you do need to charge a registration fee to cover the costs of putting on the program, you pay that directly to the vendor
- You do need to supply the SoCRA National Office with the title of your program and CVs of speaker(s). The program topic must be relative to clinical research or the research area the attendees work in (i.e., oncology)
- You will need to provide meeting space and possibly audiovisual. Many of our Chapters originate out of larger medical institutions who allow free meeting space and audiovisual. If you are a smaller facility and don't have the meeting area, a good idea might be to try to collaborate with a larger facility in your area to see if they would be willing to host the programs.
- Contact other Chapters to see how they run their programs, get ideas for format, topics and speakers.
- The SoCRA Office will provide you with certificates of attendance with noted hours of education credit to provide to your attendees. You will need to maintain a file with your program sign-in sheet to verify attendance.
- If there is already a Chapter in your area, contact the Chapter Chair (list is available on SoCRA's website at: <http://www.socra.org/html/chapters.htm>) and let that person know

you're interested in helping out.

And to help you get started, here are a few examples of our SoCRA Chapters:

SoCRA National Capital Area Chapter

We began our chapter in late 2005 and officially began meeting in 2006. We held 4 very interesting meetings in 2006 and will continue our efforts to bring educational opportunities to area members in 2007.

We heard from a variety of speakers and also were able to incorporate past SoCRA-recorded seminars into our educational opportunities. This gave us the ability to hold meetings if we weren't able to schedule a speaker and is always a good backup plan if needed.

The local members have given great support to the chapter. We struggled with location of meetings and in the first year, split our meetings between the Washington D.C. NIH campus and the Shock Trauma campus in Baltimore. We found we had many interested members in both areas and being able to come to both locations helped to serve the needs of our local members. In 2006, members attended SoCRA educational seminars in our area to meet participants and other SoCRA members. We used this as a networking opportunity and provided hospitality to the out-of-town attendees. We look forward to 2007 and serving the needs of the local members again with more educational opportunities.

Cathy McDonald, BS, CCRP

Chapter Chair, 2005 – 2009

New York State Chapter

The New York State Chapter originated through the SUNY Upstate Medical University's monthly luncheon series, "Hot Topics in Research" in 2004. We opened up attendance at these programs not only to Upstate's employees but to anyone interested in Clinical Research and were able to provide the continuing education credit to SoCRA CCRP members who attended. When the Chapter Chair was lured away by an industry position, the Chapter went with her.

The Chapter has expanded to include not only access still to Upstate's Hot Topics series, but also to other medical facilities that are hosting education programs that would allow our CCRPs to attend. The Chapter Chair keeps a record of all programs providing education credit and supplies the hosting facility with the needed certificate. The Chapter also hosts a day-long spring and fall education program which moves around the state to try to give members an opportunity to attend one if not both programs. We try whenever possible to gain sponsorship of programs to offset the costs of meeting space, audiovisual and food. The sponsor pays the vendor directly and we greatly appreciate the sponsors who have supported our education efforts.

The Chapter Chair mainly provides communication to the group through an email distribution list which currently includes over 150 Chapter "members." Our Chapter members host the programs and do all the hard work of program development and coordination. Our members also present or provide speakers and attendees get the opportunity to see how other facilities function. Our next program is scheduled for May 23rd, 2007 and will be held at the Innovative Technologies Complex in Binghamton, NY.

Kathi Durdon

Chapter Chair