The current research environment has been impacted by the increase in regulatory requirements, the decrease in funding due to the economy, and the challenge for research sites to manage unexpected events. Additionally, novice research coordinators and limited educational experience of study coordinators leaves research sites unable to cope with these challenges. In late 2010, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) supported the development of a Clinical Research Support Program (CRSP) for the exclusive purpose of functioning as a modified institutional clinical research organization. This program was designed to provide any or all support for implementing a clinical (or non-clinical) study at UAB.

The program also provides the highest quality support as well as research education. The main goal of CRSP is to strengthen research offices or groups and improve research at UAB. The CRSP office is composed of a pool of trained and experienced research nurse coordinators, non-nurse research coordinators, data managers, regulatory personnel and data entry personnel. Staff have experience in cardiology, cancer, endocrinology, nephrology, neurology, pediatrics, School of Public Health, infectious diseases, pulmonary, CV surgery, GI, and continues to expand. CRSP works in conjunction with the Clinical Trials Office (CTO) to better serve the research needs at UAB by building programs to increase education and training for all members of the investigative team. Some of the programs that have been implemented so far are weekly comprehensive research seminars that incorporate Good Clinical Practice training (GCPs), monthly research orientation and templates for Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Reasons for seeking CRSP support vary, but are reflective of the challenges in the current research environment. CRSP is focused on providing a ‘best practice’ environment extending the mission of the CCTS to facilitate the highest quality of clinical research across campus.

The CRSP Staff provides clinical support for various research activities across campus:

- Coordination of various research activities with Trained and Experienced Research Nurse Coordinators
- Protocol Driven Nursing Skills
- Regulatory Support: IRB, OSP, IND /IDE applications, Clinical Trials.gov
- Data Entry
- Laboratory Specimen Collection and Processing
- Budget Preparation and Negotiation
- Monitoring
- Planning, Initiative, and Closeout of Trials
- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Training and Mentoring Consulting
- Development and Creation of Essential Study Documents
- Services can be provided for activities at UAB, TKC, Children’s Hospital, and VA

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