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## Florence Healthcare welcomes Key Opinion Leaders Kristin Surdam and Gunnar Esiason



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*New leaders will focus on making clinical trials more efficient and accessible*

[Florence Healthcare](#)™ announced that it has hired two key opinion leaders as part of its mission to make clinical trials more efficient and accessible. Kristin Surdam, MS, PMP, CCRC, will lead the company's thought leadership team and efforts to engage sponsors and contract research organizations (CROs), while Gunnar Esiason, MBA, MPH, will lead patient-facing strategies.

Florence Healthcare's software platforms currently link more than 10,000 research sites to hundreds of sponsors. "Kristin and Gunnar will help us keep the focus on creating better connections between patients and clinical trial teams across the research enterprise," said Catherine Gregor, chief clinical trial officer for Florence Healthcare. "We believe that meaningful connections will result in faster and more equitable cures."

Surdam has more than 15 years of experience in phase I – IV multicenter clinical trials at both the site and sponsor levels. She's worked in multiple roles and therapeutic areas and at multiple organizations, including Clinilabs, Covance and the Vanderbilt University Medical Center. She has also earned industry certifications as both a clinical research coordinator and a project manager, demonstrating her proficiency and commitment to the industry.

"Having held several roles of varying levels within the industry, I found that each one unequivocally announced the myriad of inefficiencies facing research sites, CROs and sponsors alike," said Surdam. "I'm excited to be able to utilize the knowledge gained from those experiences to serve as a key opinion leader and subject matter expert at Florence Healthcare. I look forward to being a part of the effort to drive clinical research technology forward and ultimately, condense the time-to-market for desperately needed new therapies."

Esiason is a cystic fibrosis and rare disease patient leader who is passionate about early-stage drug development, patient empowerment and health policy. Professionally, he developed a patient engagement platform for a medical nutrition company and built a venture philanthropy practice at the Boomer Esiason Foundation. He has consulted on clinical trial development, a real-world evidence population health study, and a cystic fibrosis-specific mental health and wellness screening tool.

Esiason has been the face of fundraising efforts for the Boomer Esiason Foundation, which has yielded more than \$160 million for the fight against cystic fibrosis since he was diagnosed with the condition in 1993. His blog has amassed nearly one million page views since 2015 and he co-hosted the podcast, *Breathe In: A Cystic Fibrosis Podcast*, which climbed into the iTunes top 200 health podcasts at the end of 2018. He has recently hosted the podcast, *The State of Health with Gunnar Esiason*, which is available on all streaming services and featured several sitting U.S. senators, governors and health industry leaders. His health *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *The Hill* and *STAT News*.

"I have spent more than half a decade inside several clinical trial programs as a participant, and while I have been fortunate to see what success looks like firsthand, I have also seen how inefficient trials can be," said Esiason. "The clinical trials of tomorrow need to meet participants where they are in their lives, and I'm thrilled that Florence Healthcare is committed to making that happen."

Along with Gregor, Surdam and Esiason will play critical roles in determining which products and features Florence will create as they strive to make clinical trials faster and more patient-centric.

"I am so grateful to have this team," said Gregor. "Together, we are committed to helping inform and shape the future of technology in the clinical trials space."

Source: [Florence Healthcare](#)

Published on : Wed, 7 Sep 2022