

Program Management Support

Client Health and Human Services

Problem With the passing of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA) of 2006, the HHS took on the responsibility for national influenza pandemic preparedness which included strengthening the internal United States manufacturing infrastructure to provide an increased pandemic influenza response. The immediate goals were development, manufacture, and stockpiling of vaccines and antiviral therapeutics. This organization was not equipped for a mission of this magnitude. The organization had to grow quickly, recruiting technical vaccine expertise from the pharmaceutical industry to effectively initiate and manage the broad and complicated portfolio of products being demanded by PAHPA.

Approach Through our extensive database of professionals and proactive recruitment systems, Tunnell placed over a dozen vaccine experts into the HHS. These vaccine scientists possessed expertise in multiple disciplines that included product development, regulatory affairs, manufacturing, and logistics with decades of pharmaceutical experience. Although the staffing was segregated into different organizational departments, the diverse scientists brought a focused teaming approach, and created a strong cohesive team. This allowed for cross-functional depth, which subsequently provided a full spectrum approach to the challenges of assessing new technologies, writing technical RFPs, supporting expert review panels, and ultimately developing, manufacturing and distributing a pandemic vaccine to the American public.

Results This expert staffing enabled HHS to establish feasible project plans, develop appropriate contracting agreements, and assisted in the initial management of new projects (10+ contracts): e.g., expansion and upgrading of current vaccine manufacturing, new cell-based research efforts to replace egg-based manufacturing, and initiate construction of new manufacturing facilities within the continental United States. When the call for an H1N1 vaccine became paramount, the HHS foundation (with its Tunnell team of experts), were able to respond in an unprecedented manner with 6 + contracts to meet the national need for a pandemic influenza vaccine.