



MERIDIAN

Clinical Research

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Meridian Clinical Research Appoints Chief Medical Officer, Adds New Medical Director

August 9, 2022; Omaha, NE — [Meridian Clinical Research](#), a leading multi-specialty investigative research site network, has promoted [Brandon Essink, MD, CPI](#), to Chief Medical Officer, and [Shishir Khetan, MD](#), to Medical Director. Both physicians will continue to serve as Principal Investigators for clinical trials at Meridian. The doctors will support new and existing principal investigators across Meridian's therapeutically diverse network, which has grown to 35 sites.

Dr. Essink has served as a Meridian Principal Investigator since 2003. Throughout this tenure, he has become a renowned investigator for pioneering vaccine research programs. In 2020, Dr. Essink led weekly meetings with vaccine developers participating in the Operation Warp Speed (OWS) program and collaborating with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA). [He served as one of three co-lead principal investigators for Moderna's Phase 3 COVID-19 vaccine trial for mRNA-1273](#), was appointed to the trial's data and safety monitoring board (DSMB), and co-authored [the trial's primary publication in the *New England Journal of Medicine*](#).

Dr. Khetan joined Meridian as a Principal Investigator in 2018. In 2020, he enrolled more than 500 participants into Moderna's Phase 3 COVID-19 vaccine trial (mRNA-1273), and, under his guidance, Meridian's Rockville site continues to be a top enroller for vaccine research programs. In 2022, Dr. Khetan was also named President of Rockville Internal Medicine Group.

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Dr. Khetan is also a Regional Medical Director and Virtual Medical Director for Privia Medical Group, and serves on the Privia Health and Privia Quality Network Board of Governors.

Together, Dr. Essink and Dr. Khetan will oversee clinical practices and support Meridian's strategic development team to enhance physician engagement and oversight. The doctors currently serve as a resource for other Meridian investigators during trial conduct, and meet and support the training of all new physicians joining Meridian as research partners. The two will also provide protocol design and authoring support for research programs.

Dr. Essink said he and Dr. Khetan will focus on ensuring Meridian's research capabilities continue to be best-in-class for Sponsors and CROs. "As the company adds sites and therapeutic specialties, Dr. Khetan and I will strengthen the clinical practices that drive responsive, accurate trial conduct," said Dr. Essink.

Dr. Khetan commented that, "Clinical research is entering a new frontier with decentralized trials and electronic source documentation. With our combined efforts, expansive network, and veteran expertise, Meridian will continue to be a leader for traditional clinical trials, and for research programs involving novel technologies and digitalized research conduct."

Since opening in Omaha in 1999, Meridian has enrolled more than 85,000 patients in 3,400 clinical trials. To learn more about Meridian's network and research capabilities, visit mcrmed.com/sponsors-and-cros.

ABOUT MERIDIAN CLINICAL RESEARCH

[Meridian Clinical Research](http://mcrmed.com) partners with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies to research new drugs, medical devices, and diagnostics that could improve human health and wellbeing. Founded in 1999, Meridian is a multi-specialty site network headquartered at its dedicated research center in Omaha, NE, and conducts Phase 1-4 clinical trials at investigative sites nationwide. Meridian supports research across numerous therapeutic areas and excels in high-volume vaccine trials. For more information, visit mcrmed.com.

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