REACHnet Overview
The Louisiana Clinical Data Research Network (REACHnet) – funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) was founded in 2013. Phase I of this project lasted one and a half years, and focused on building the infrastructure of the data network (e.g. health system partnerships, data sharing technology, governance and policies, etc.). In July 2015, the REACHnet was awarded 3 more years of funding from PCORI to optimize and expand the network. Now that the mission of Phase I (developing the REACHnet) has succeeded, Phase II of the project will entail using the REACHnet to conduct patient-centered comparative effectiveness research.

Patients served an important role during Phase I of the REACHnet. Approximately 80 patients in New Orleans and Baton Rouge participated in condition-specific (e.g. diabetes, weight management, sickle cell) research advisory groups. These groups convened every other month to discuss priority research topics and potential studies. In Phase II, however, the REACHnet is in need of more consistent patient consultation.

Purpose of REACHnet Patient Consultants
The goal of including patient partners as key personnel during Phase II is to acknowledge the importance of the patient experience to inform the network, formally recognize the expertise of patients advising on the project, and ensure that patient stakeholders have equitable representation on the project. As such, patient partners will serve as content experts and work with the REACHnet in a consultant capacity to review and advise on key network activities and processes.

General Consultation Activities
Patient partners will be expected to provide consultation and feedback via email or in-person meetings as new research studies develop. With direction from the REACHnet Coordinating Center, patient consultants will be hired under formal contracts, with specified deliverables. Certain requests may be assigned to one patient consultant, whereas other requests may be completed by all consultants working as a team. Short-term consultation requests will most likely be communicated through email, whereas larger requests will most likely require in-person meetings.

The Patient Partner will work closely with the REACHnet Engagement Director and engagement team to support and further build patient engagement initiatives of REACHnet. The ideal candidate will be able to work collaboratively with the patient community and organizations, researchers, and REACHnet staff to effectively incorporate the patient perspective into REACH initiatives. This position will provide consultation as well as actively working with staff on identified deliverables based on the current needs of the projects and strengths of the applicant. These include, but are not limited to, the duties and responsibilities listed below.

- Review network policies and provide guidance on both content and lay adaptations for the public when appropriate
- Read and evaluate REACHnet research applications for patient-centeredness and patient engagement approaches
• Work with REACHnet research applicants and Engagement personnel to conceptualize and implement patient engagement plans
• Strategize approaches to overcome engagement challenges (time, resources, geography, trust)
• Lead the Community Health Advisory Board’s outreach strategy to engage and expand patient and community-based organization (CBO) stakeholder groups
• Participate in media and communication initiatives
• Assist in the facilitation of topic-specific meetings for various research projects
• Prioritize research topics according to patient perspectives
• Review content of health information for patient-centeredness before dissemination
• Spearhead the development of multiple training initiatives for REACHnet stakeholders
• Assist in the brainstorming of different procedures and tools that educate activated stakeholders on using our electronic portal to review research and engagement proposals/plans (this may include: protocol development, creation of evaluation forms, preparation of checklists, written procedure guides).
• Partake in other network activities as requested

Desired Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities:
• Strong connection to patient experience or medically underserved population(s)
• Able to generalize specific disease/patient experience to a more universal goal of patient centered research
• Ability to help bridge the patient and research community
• Active role in community (local, patient, or other- please specify in your personal statement)
• Comfortable with public speaking & group facilitation
• Understand policy and the ability to navigate systems
• Experience in patient advocacy
• Confidence to actively participate in multi-stakeholder groups to communicate the patient perspective
• Ability to use technology to collaborate and communicate (ex: email, facebook, Microsoft word)

Requirements
Patient consultants will be required to communicate several times per week with REACHnet staff. Emails, conference calls, and in-person meetings will serve as the primary forms of communication. Patient consultants will be required to check their emails on a daily basis and respond to consultation requests (see above) within 48 hours of the email being sent. This requirement will ensure that REACHnet research activities continue to progress efficiently.

Should poor communication (e.g. not responding to consultation requests or not returning phone calls) cause barriers to productivity, the contract between the REACHnet and the patient consultant may be terminated.
Time Commitment and Compensation
Patient consultants will be asked to commit to a maximum of 10 hours per month (120 hours per year) at a rate of $25 per hour. Existing and new stakeholders will be asked to serve as consultants on specific projects as topics arise that align with their patient experience and personal skill set.

Patient partners will be employed by the REACHnet through a signed contract, and will be expected to submit invoices for their hourly work using the REACHnet Patient Consultant Invoice template. Invoices will be due each month to the REACHnet Engagement Director, Rebekah Angove. The Engagement Coordinator, Upama Aktaruzzaman, will assist patient consultants in the completion of paperwork and send reminders regarding invoice due dates.

Conflict of Interest
Patient partners are required to communicate their role in the network and compensation to their current employer (if applicable) to ensure there is no conflict of interest. Patient partners will also be required to disclose their work with other community partners and projects (including volunteer and paid work with CBOs, area non-profits, and other health focused institutions) to ensure there are no programmatic conflicts of interest.