Project HOPE (Helping Open Pathways to Enrollment)
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This project presents a unique opportunity to evaluate a community based culture-centered program to increase diversity in HIV/AIDS clinical research. “There’s Hope in Our Soul,” will engage one of the most powerful forces for community and personal behavioral change in the South, Black/African American communities of faith. Few interventions designed to increase racial and ethnic minority participation in clinical research have been subjected to rigorous scientific evaluation. Therefore, a comprehensive assessment of the multifaceted “Hope in Our Soul” intervention will inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of community-developed interventions on a national level. This project will enroll 3 matched cohorts of 35 totaling 105 in each arm drawn from representative churches across the Atlanta metropolitan area resulting in a sample of 210 participants. Churches will be matched on selected characteristics including denomination type, distance to the clinical research site, and membership size. The intervention consists of two weekly two-hour small group sessions with a separate one-day faith leader and congregants’ colloquium. The intervention groups will participate in activities that promote knowledge about minorities and their historical experiences in clinical research, group harms, contemporary clinical trial ethics and regulations, and opportunities for community involvement in clinical research. The control groups will receive general printed material about clinical research. Participants will undergo baseline assessment with follow up at 3- and 6-month intervals. The primary outcome of the study will be the difference in proportions of volunteers in the intervention and control groups who enroll in a clinical trial at one-year post-intervention. The results of our study will fill a critical gap in rigorously tested approaches to increase diversity in HIV-related clinical trials, and will further our understanding of the influence of social networks on clinical trials participation.