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Streamlining Multi-site IRB Reviews – The CCSN Research Review Repository

Jessica R. Ridpath¹, Sarah M. Greene¹, MPH, Rob Reid, MD, PhD¹

¹Group Health Cooperative Center for Health Studies

Background: Coordinating multi-site research review creates many challenges for protecting human subjects and assuring health information privacy. The administrative burden for researchers and review committees is substantial, and iterative reviews at each site studies only augment this burden. One goal of the Coordinated Clinical Studies Network (CCSN) is to streamline IRB and other research review mechanisms in the HMORN via the development of a web-based interface that makes information about research review at multiple sites available to all HMORN investigators.

Methods/Approach: We conducted semi-structured interviews with IRB administrators from twelve participating sites within the HMORN. Following the interviews, we identified and catalogued similarities and differences in the research review process at each site. After receiving approval from each site, we synthesized this information into a web-based repository of IRB procedures and compiled a selection of IRB applications and other relevant materials.

Results/Outcomes: HMORN investigators can now access the web-based repository, which includes: 1) meeting schedules and contact information for key IRB staff members; 2) instructions on applying for regular or expedited IRB review; 3) timelines and types of IRB decisions; 4) other compulsory review processes; and 5) investigator training, informed consent guidelines, and other institutional and state requirements. The interviews confirmed that sites have differing IRB application forms; varying requirements for supplemental information; variability in the use of expedited review; different policies regarding consent waivers; and variability in how IRB modifications are handled. This repository will soon be refined into a step-by-step guide to further help HMORN investigators navigate multi-site research review.

Conclusions/Implications: HMORN investigators conducting multi-site research can benefit from using this CCSN repository to identify local review requirements early in the planning process. The repository is designed to highlight the most helpful information and present it in a user-friendly fashion. The CCSN is relying on user participation to help us develop a comprehensive and easily-navigated web resource that meets the needs of investigators across the Network and facilitates multi-site research review.