

IRB MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Institutional Review Boards (IRB) are specifically designated boards that conduct ethical and safety review of research involving the participation of human subjects. IRB members assist in the review of new and ongoing research to advocate for the rights and welfare of research participants. Members with diverse backgrounds and expertise are needed on the IRB to provide varied perspectives for the review, including individuals with medical, science and non-science backgrounds, representatives from the institutional faculty and staff, and unaffiliated members serving on the board as community representatives.

Penn State Hershey has four IRBs that review proposed research at the College of Medicine and Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. Individuals interested in serving on the IRB need only an appreciation for the importance of clinical research and an interest in protecting research participants. Each IRB member reviews materials and attends board meetings prepared to discuss proposed research within his or her realm of expertise. Resources are provided to help all members to gain the necessary information base regarding research protection.

IRB membership involves attending one regular meeting per month and also spending time reading materials in advance to prepare for the IRB discussions. The board meetings are scheduled from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Monday afternoons. A typical IRB member's overall time commitment is 6 to 8 hours per month. The IRB materials are reviewed electronically and are accessible about 10 days before a meeting. Generally board members bring a laptop or other device to access the agenda and materials during board meetings.

Alternates are appointed to substitute as the voting member when a regular member cannot attend, or if the alternate's specific expertise is needed. Also, when interested, alternates may attend any IRB meeting to observe or participate in the member educational sessions.

Interested individuals may apply to the IRB anytime. Most new members are appointed July 1 when the IRB membership year begins; however, occasionally a prospective volunteer is not called on until a corresponding vacancy occurs. An IRB member application is available under *IRB Operations* at www.pennstatehershey.org/irb. For more information please contact the Human Subjects Protection Office at 717-531-5687 or e-mail cmanchester@hmc.psu.edu.

Board /Info-IRB Membership.doc Rev.4/28/2014

