



Penn Live News Release

Human research protections program receives national accreditation

Thursday, January 11, 2007

University Park, Pa. -- Penn State's human research protections program was awarded full accreditation by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs Inc. (AAHRPP).

The Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs Inc. (AAHRPP) is a nonprofit organization that works with organizations that conduct human research to raise the level of protection for research participants. AAHRPP accredits organizations that can demonstrate they provide participant safeguards that surpass the threshold of state and federal requirements.

Eva J. Pell, senior vice president for research and dean of The Graduate School, said, "The rigorous accreditation process demonstrates the University's commitment to protecting the well-being and safety of participants in human research at all campus locations. Through the accreditation process, the Office for Research Protections at University Park and the Human Subjects Protections Office at the College of Medicine worked collaboratively to standardize policies and procedures, resulting in full accreditation for the entire University system."

The AAHRPP accreditation is unique because it includes all campus and colleges at Penn State, including the College of Medicine. Many major universities' accreditation processes are separate from those at their medical centers, according to Candice Yekel, director of Penn State's Office for Research Protections.

"Cutting-edge research that offers the potential of lifesaving treatments and cures is essential to the mission of an academic medical center in order to provide top-notch patient care and a dynamic learning environment," said Harold L. Paz, senior vice president for health affairs, dean of the College of Medicine and chief executive officer of the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. "This accreditation affirms our dedication to our research mission, and to the well-being of our patients and our community."

Jay Moskowitz, vice dean for research, College of Medicine, and associate vice president for Health Sciences Research, noted, "By awarding Penn State full accreditation, AAHRPP has recognized our desire to hold ourselves to a higher set of standards than required by federal and state law. AAHRPP accreditation is a voluntary process designed to demonstrate these standards, and therefore increase the public trust in research safety and quality of data."

AAHRPP standards exceed federal regulation in two ways: the protections for research

participants that the federal government requires only for federally sponsored or regulated research are extended to all research. AAHRPP requires additional protections, such as conflict of interest rules and community education.

To earn and maintain accreditation, a research program undergoes rigorous site evaluations by a visiting AAHRPP team every three years and submits periodic reports in between visits. At Penn State, the accreditation team examined research processes used in a wide variety of studies including medical research, nutrition, social sciences, education and nutrition at all campuses.

Examples of research with human subjects include testing new therapies and drugs to treat chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; looking at whether nurse case management can improve regular health measurements of people with type 2 diabetes; and evaluating the effectiveness of HeartMate, a new left ventricular heart assist device, designed both as a bridge option to get heart failure patients to transplant and as a final option for patients not eligible for transplant.

AAHRPP has approved accreditation for 45 organizations with 127 entities, comprising community hospitals, teaching hospitals, independent review boards, research institutes and universities. AAHRPP is currently working with nearly 400 additional organizations that are in the accreditation process.

Contact

Vicki Fong
vfong@psu.edu
<http://live.psu.edu>
814-865-9481

Contact