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. Penn State Hershey has four IRBs that review proposed and ongoing research at Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and the College of Medicine.

In order to conduct thorough reviews of research, IRBs include members with varied experience and expertise, including medical, science and non-scientist perspectives and community representatives serving as non-affiliated members. Each IRB member reviews materials and attends board meetings prepared to discuss proposed research within his or her realm of expertise or experience. Individuals interested in serving on the IRB need only an appreciation for the importance of clinical research and an interest in protecting research participants. Educational resources are provided to help all members gain the necessary information base regarding research protection.

IRB membership involves attending one regular monthly meeting, generally 1:00–5:00 p.m. on a Monday afternoon, and also spending time reading materials in advance to prepare for the IRB discussions. 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. Board members bring a laptop or other device to access and view these materials during the IRB meetings.

Members of the IRB are covered under the institution’s liability insurance for their service on the board. Penn State Hershey employees and students are automatically covered. Community IRB members are required to register with the institutional Volunteer Services office in order to be included in this insurance coverage before beginning IRB service, and instructions will be provided for this process.

Interested individuals may apply to the IRB anytime by submitting the IRB member form, available under IRB Operations at www.pennstatehershey.org/irb. New members are appointed to the IRB by the area of expertise or experience needed to fill a vacancy. 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. For more information please contact the Human Subjects Protection Office at 717-531-5687 or e-mail hspo@hmc.psu.edu.

Board/Info-IRB Membership.doc Rev.1/28/2016