November 23, 2022

Research Memo # 10 – Research Ethics and COVID-19 Update

The University Human Research Ethics Board (UHREB) has implemented a few changes regarding research ethics requirements, considerations for research, and risk mitigation during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of November 15, 2022, we require researchers to view Guidance Document 11: COVID-19 Requirements to understand these requirements, considerations and risk mitigations for their research projects.

UHREB acknowledges that implications of COVID-19 on research and public health are continually evolving. In the context of changes to Public Health Orders within Manitoba, the following changes are being implemented by UHREB as of November 15, 2022 with regards to ethical review of research:

1) A face-to-face checklist is no longer required.
2) A separate COVID-19 safety plan is not required for projects where the risk of COVID is deemed no greater than participants or researchers encounter in their normal daily activities.
3) The WebGrants check box for "research in a publicly declared emergency" should not be checked.
4) Risk mitigation strategies related to COVID-19 should continue to be detailed in the protocol and informed consent, proportionate to the likelihood and magnitude of the potential harms.

As COVID-19 continues to pose health risks, researchers should ensure that the safety of their research team members and participants remains a high priority. In cases where the investigator or UHREB determines the likelihood or magnitude of COVID-19 risk is elevated, or that participants may be more vulnerable to COVID-19 infection or adverse outcomes, investigators should include more detailed risk mitigation. Although no longer required of all applications, UHREB may request the above documents on a case-by-case basis.

Please note the relevant guidance document and additional considerations are posted on the Human Ethics webpage here.

For questions about human ethics, contact the Ethics Program Officer at ethics@uwinnipeg.ca.