

February 24th, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

As you may already be aware, the Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Centre's Research Ethics Board (TOHRC REB) is currently in the process of merging with the Ottawa Hospital Research Ethics Board (OHREB).

I have met with both the TOHRC REB and the OHREB in order to facilitate this merger and ensure that it will not be disruptive to research processes at TOHRC. The IRRD has always maintained a high standard for research affecting our patients, their families, and our staff members, and the proposed process for this merger will ensure that this high standard remains intact. Overall, the merger will only minimally affect the research application process at TOHRC.

Here are some details regarding the proposed timeline for the merger, and the changes you can expect to see as the merger progresses:

- Beginning in mid-February, we will ask that all new research proposals be submitted using the Council of Research Ethics Boards (COREB) application form, along with the IRRD impact sheet which includes pages for administrative signatures from those administrators whose area(s) may be impacted by the research in question. These forms are available on our website at www.irrd.ca, and the OHRI and OHREB websites will be updated to reflect these changes.
- From February to the end of March 2009, all currently active research projects and all new projects submitted within that timeframe will be forwarded to the OHREB for entry into the IRIS research database. The IRIS system is used both by OHRI and OHREB to track virtually all aspects of a research protocol, including pertinent dates (submission date, amendment approval dates, etc), funding information for research projects, contact information for researchers and scientists, and so on. Researchers will be given access to this database as well in order to allow them to track their projects more effectively.
- Beginning April 1st, 2009, TOHRC REB will be formally dissolved and replaced by a Research Advisory Committee. Current members of the TOHRC REB will be asked to volunteer on the Advisory Committee during the transition; also during that time, meetings will be held with stakeholders to determine a more formal membership structure for the Advisory Committee.
- Members of the TOHRC REB will be invited to sit on the OHREB if they wish to do so; it has not yet been determined if a member from TOHRC will sit on a formal, permanent basis on the OHREB.

- From April to September 2009, the Research Advisory Committee membership will be formalized and our process will be adjusted as needed according to the application process with OHREB.

The IRRD Research Application process will remain virtually unchanged, with the exception of using the new forms, and the elimination of the Privacy Protocol Checklist from the IRRD process. This is completed as part of the OHREB evaluation of new research projects, and thus will be made redundant within our process.

Projects will still be submitted for a scientific peer review, and as previously mentioned will still be forwarded to administrators whose departments or patients may be impacted by the research. Helen Zipes (TOHRC Clinical Director) and Cameron Love (TOHRC VP) will still sign off on new research applications. Once a project has completed the IRRD scientific review process, it will be forwarded to the Research Advisory Committee for review. The Advisory Committee will review projects and recommend either expedited or full-board review by OHREB. OHREB has agreed that if the Advisory Committee recommends a full-board review, this will be done.

Research applications that are submitted directly to the OHREB that have implications for TOHRC patients and/or family members, staff or resources will be re-routed to the IRRD for scientific peer review and evaluation by the Advisory Committee. This will be reflected on the OHRI and OHREB websites, and will ensure that we maintain the highest standard of rehabilitation research.

If you have any questions, or would like more information regarding the merger, please contact my secretary, Christina DeCurtis at 613-737-7350 x75321.

Sincerely,

Jamie MacDougall
Director of Research
Institute for Rehabilitation Research and Development