The Office of Human Research Ethics (OHRE) is responsible for ethical and regulatory oversight of research at the UNC that involves human subjects. The OHRE administers, supports, and guides the work of the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and all related activities. Any research involving human subjects proposed by faculty, staff, or students must be reviewed and approved by an IRB before research may begin, and before related grants may be funded. The OHRE and the IRBs are critical components of the coordinated Human Research Protection Program, which serves to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects. All components of this program must work together to ensure institutional compliance with ethical principles and regulatory requirements. The OHRE provides a significant number of services to the academic community including: 1) Integrated oversight of ethical and regulatory issues in human subjects research conducted at UNC Chapel Hill; 2) Effective and efficient IRB review, with expertise of more than 70 members across six IRBs and proactive consultation and training; 3) Development of common tools and resources, including online application forms for all IRBs, and the automatic creation of informed consent documents through the online process; 4) OHRE web site and campus-wide help desk; 5) Online system for managing and tracking protocols; 6) Facilitation and strengthening of links to other entities involved in oversight of human research at UNC Chapel Hill; 7) Provision of additional resources to improve services and functioning, such as compliance and monitoring, training and education, information services and administration; 8) Achievement of accreditation for UNC through the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP).

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has committed to uphold regulatory and ethical standards through a Federal Wide Assurance approved by the federal Office for Human Research Protections and our agreement is FWA4801. OHRE and the IRBs are guided by Standard Operating Procedures. An Advisory  
Committee with broad representation across campus also provides counsel to OHRE. The Biomedical IRB, formerly School of Medicine IRB, reviews research involving the School of Medicine, School of Pharmacy, UNC Hospitals, and research in other units that involves biomedical interventions. Expertise is focused on medical, surgical, physiological, or pharmacological studies and includes research with drugs, devices, counseling, or other interventions.

*Updated: 3/7/2019*