

## HRPP INNOVATIONS

### USC: Moving Forward with a Fully Accredited HRPP

For the University of Southern California (USC), AAHRPP accreditation represents an important step in an ongoing effort to remain among the nation's leading human research protection programs (HRPPs).

Even before the university was notified that it had been awarded full accreditation, Susan L. Rose, Ph.D., Executive Director of USC's Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS), had developed an ambitious agenda for the 2007–2008 academic year, building upon the lessons learned during the accreditation process. At the heart of that agenda is a continued emphasis on innovation, collaboration, education, quality improvement, and communication.

OPRS presented its plans to the USC community in the July issue of the OPRS newsletter, detailing a comprehensive, coordinated plan to

ensure continued adherence to the expectations set and promises made during the accreditation process. The newsletter is available at [www.usc.edu/admin/provost/oprs/news/archives/index.html](http://www.usc.edu/admin/provost/oprs/news/archives/index.html). Click on Volume 3, Issue 4.

"Accreditation is the gold standard, but that doesn't mean we stop once we attain it," Dr. Rose explains. "Instead, we view accreditation as a validation of our program and an incentive to push forward."

In the 2007–2008 academic year, OPRS will collaborate with research professionals from the university's Health Research Association, Health Sciences Campus, School of Pharmacy, and General Clinical Research Center to implement a continuous quality improvement program that will involve regulatory science students in designing and

conducting audits. In October, USC and the University of California, Los Angeles will host an IRB retreat featuring guest speakers and topics that go well beyond regulatory issues.

As part of its education efforts, OPRS will continue to conduct monthly education sessions during the academic year and offer individual, classroom, faculty, and group sessions upon request. OPRS is also developing a first-of-its kind education guide for community members who serve on IRBs. Like all OPRS publications, the guide will be available for users nationwide. It is the next in a series of publications that target specific audiences, including students, investigators, and research participants.

All OPRS efforts are designed to exceed the requirements and fulfill the intent of accreditation. "AAHRPP accreditation isn't just about following regulations," Dr. Rose says. "It's about doing everything we can — often as innovatively as possible — to protect participants."

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### UK: Tapping International Consultants

The University of Kentucky's (UK) Office of Research Integrity maintains a list of international and cultural consultants to streamline the protocol review process, ensure that Institutional Review Board (IRB) decisions reflect cultural sensitivities, and provide maximum protection for research participants.

Before it is submitted to the IRB, each research protocol is screened to determine whether an international or cultural consultant will be required. Consultants are selected, based on their expertise, from a list that is

continually updated to make sure it remains current and comprehensive.

"The consultants qualify on the basis of their cultural or linguistic knowledge or training," explains John V. Ryan, J.D., Professional Associate in UK's Office of Research Integrity. "And, of course, there can be no conflict of interest or even appearance of impropriety."

UK developed the list and screening process, in part, in response to an increase in the number of research protocols, especially those involving international participants and indi-

viduals from geographic regions not represented on the IRB.

"Identifying consultants is a challenge for IRBs everywhere," says Ada Sue Selwitz, Director of UK's Office of Research Integrity. "Our university's Office of International Affairs is a valuable resource in identifying consultants. Others are recruited at the recommendations of investigators and IRB members. Once an individual is recruited, we ask permission to add them to our list for future reviews."

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