



Human Research Protection Program / Institutional Review Board  
Standard Operating Procedure  
2018 Common Rule

**For Studies Initially Approved on  
or After January 21, 2019**

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## 1 Obtaining Informed Consent from Research Subjects

No investigator conducting research under the auspices of MaineHealth may involve a human being as a subject in research without obtaining the legally effective informed consent of the subject or the subject's legally authorized representative (LAR) unless a waiver of consent has been approved by the IRB of record. Except as provided in Sections 15.10 and 15.11 of these procedures, informed consent must be documented using a written consent form approved by the IRB.

The informed consent process involves three key features: (1) disclosing to the prospective human subject information needed to make an informed decision; (2) facilitating the understanding of what has been disclosed; and (3) promoting the voluntariness of the decision about whether or not to participate in the research.

Informed consent is more than just a signature on a form. It is a process of information exchange to include reading, discussing, receiving answers to any questions, and signing the consent document. The informed consent process is the critical communication link between the prospective human subject and an investigator, beginning with the initial approach by an investigator and continuing through the completion of the research study. Investigators must have received the appropriate training and be knowledgeable about the study procedures, potential risks, anticipated benefits, and alternatives in order that they may appropriately describe the research and answer questions. The exchange of information between the investigator and study participant can occur via one or more of the following modes of communication, among others; face to face dialogue; mail; electronic interface, telephone, or fax; however, obtaining informed consent must allow for a dialogue so that the potential subject has the opportunity to ask questions and receive responses. Investigators must obtain consent prior to entering a subject into a study, gathering data about a subject, and/or conducting any procedures required by the research plan, unless consent is waived by the IRB.

If someone other than the investigator conducts the interview and obtains consent, the investigator needs to formally delegate this responsibility, and the person so delegated must have received appropriate training to perform this activity. The person so delegated must be knowledgeable about the research to be conducted and the consenting process, and must have the expertise be able to answer questions about the study including those regarding risks, procedures, and alternatives. The MaineHealth IRB application solicits information regarding who will obtain consent. This should also be noted on the delegation of authority log.

Sample or draft consent documents may be developed by a sponsor or network. However, the IRB of record is the final authority on the content of the consent documents that are presented to prospective subjects.

These informed consent requirements are not intended to preempt any applicable federal, state, or local laws **(including tribal laws passed by the official governing body of an American Indian or Alaska Native tribe)** that have additional requirements for informed consent to be legally effective.

The IRB will evaluate both the consent process and the procedures for documenting informed consent to ensure that adequate informed consent is obtained from participants.

The following procedures describe the requirements for obtaining consent from subjects in research conducted under the auspices of MaineHealth. When the MaineHealth IRB is serving as the IRB of record for external sites or personnel, the below requirements may be adapted as appropriate based upon the local context where the research will occur (e.g., who may serve as a LAR, etc).

### 1.1 General Requirements

The requirement to obtain the legally effective informed consent of individuals before involving them in research is one of the central protections provided for by the federal regulations and MaineHealth HRPP. Investigators are required to obtain legally effective informed consent from a subject or the subject's LAR unless the requirement has been waived by the IRB. When informed consent is required, it must be sought prospectively, and properly documented.

Except as provided elsewhere in these Standard Operating Procedures:

1. **Before involving a human subject in research, an investigator shall obtain** the legally effective informed consent of the subject or the subject's LAR
2. An investigator shall seek informed consent only under circumstances that provide the prospective subject or the LAR sufficient opportunity to **discuss and** consider whether or not to participate and that minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence
3. The information that is given to the subject or the LAR shall be in language understandable to the subject or the LAR
4. **The prospective subject or the LAR must be provided with the information that a reasonable person would want to have in order to make an informed decision about whether to participate, and an opportunity to discuss that information**
5. **Informed consent must begin with a concise and focused presentation of the key information that is most likely to assist a prospective subject or LAR in understanding the reasons why one might or might not want to participate in the research. This part of the informed consent must be organized and presented in a way that facilitates comprehension**
6. **Informed consent as a whole must present information in sufficient detail relating to the research, and must be organized and presented in a way that does not merely provide lists of isolated facts, but rather facilitates the prospective subject's or LAR's understanding of the reasons why one might or might not want to participate**
7. No informed consent may include any exculpatory language through which the subject or the LAR is made to waive or appear to waive any of the subject's legal rights, or releases or appears to release the investigator, the sponsor, the institution, or its agents from liability for negligence.

### 1.2 Informed Consent Process

Informed consent must be obtained under the following circumstances:

1. Informed consent may only be obtained from subjects who have the legal and mental capacity to give consent. For subjects without that capacity, permission must be obtained from a legal guardian with appropriate authority to make decisions regarding the activities called for in the research or a legally authorized representative (LAR);
2. The informed consent information must be presented in language that is understandable to the subject (or LAR/guardian). To the extent possible, the language should be understandable by a person who is educated to 8<sup>th</sup> grade level and layman's terms shall be used in the description of the research. The IRB may require or allow different readability standards based upon the characteristics of the target subject population;
3. For subjects with [Limited English Proficiency](#) (LEP), informed consent must be obtained in a language that is understandable to the subject (or LAR/guardian). In accordance with this policy, the MaineHealth IRB requires that informed consent discussions include an MaineHealth-certified interpreter (exceptions may be approved by the IRB on a case-by-case basis) when the prospective subject does not understand the language of the person who is obtaining consent, and, in most circumstances, that consent materials are translated; and
4. The investigator is responsible for ensuring that each prospective subject is adequately informed about all aspects of the research and understands the information provided.

### 1.3 Legally Authorized Representative (LAR)

A Legally Authorized Representative (LAR) is defined by [45 CFR 46.102\(c\)](#) and [21 CFR 50.3](#) as *"an individual or judicial or other body authorized under applicable law to consent on behalf of a prospective subject to the subject's participation in the procedure(s) involved in the research."*

Who may serve as LAR is determined by state law. Maine law does not specifically address informed consent by LARs of incapacitated persons for participation in clinical research. Thus, the applicable guidelines for determining the most appropriate LAR for research are based upon the guidelines that apply in the clinical setting.

See Section 16.6 for specific discussion of research involving children, including parent or guardian permission requirements.

For legally incompetent adults who are unable to make medical decisions, a legal representative (court appointed guardian) or durable power of attorney for health care must provide informed consent for non-emergent medical treatment. The legal guardian must be authorized by the court to make decisions regarding the types of activities, procedures, or treatments called for in the research to serve as LAR. Substitute decision-makers, as defined in MaineHealth's clinical informed consent policy (*Informed Consent, MaineHealth Institutional Policy Manual [06/09/17]*), may serve as LAR for research involving clinical procedures or treatments when a court appointed guardian or durable power of attorney for health care are not in place.

When the MaineHealth IRB serves as the IRB of record for external sites and the use of LARs is proposed, information regarding relevant state law and local policy will be sought (local context information) and applied.

LARs should be well informed regarding their roles and responsibilities when asked to provide surrogate consent. In addition to the consent information, LARs should be informed that their obligation is to try to determine what the potential subject would do if able to provide consent, or if the potential subject's wishes cannot be determined, what they think is in the person's best interest.

Investigators must describe the intended use of LARs in their submission to the IRB. The IRB determines whether the use of LARs is appropriate for a given research study.

Further discussion and procedures for assessment of capacity and inclusion of adults with impaired decision-making capacity in research are described in Section 16.7.

#### 1.4 Basic Elements of Informed Consent

To be valid, the consent process must provide the following basic elements of information to potential subjects:

1. A statement that the **study involves research**, an explanation of the **purposes** of the research and the **expected duration** of the subject's participation, a description of the **procedures** to be followed, and identification of any **procedures which are experimental**;
2. A description of any reasonably foreseeable **risks or discomforts** to the subject;
3. A description of any **benefits** to the subject or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research;
4. A disclosure of appropriate **alternative procedures** or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the subject;
5. A statement describing the extent, if any, to which **confidentiality** of records identifying the subject must be maintained;
6. **For research involving more than minimal risk**, an explanation as to whether any compensation **and** an explanation as to whether any medical treatments are available if injury occurs **and**, if so, what they consist of, or where further information may be obtained;
7. Contact information for the research team for questions, concerns, or complaints
8. Contact information for someone independent of the research team for problems, concerns, questions, or input
9. A statement that participation is **voluntary**, refusal to participate will involve **no penalty or loss of benefits** to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject **may discontinue participation** at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled;
10. One of the following statements about any research that involves the **collection of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens**:
  - a. A statement that **identifiers might be removed** from the identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens **and that**, after such removal, the information or biospecimens **could be used** for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research

studies **without additional informed consent** from the subject or the legally authorized representative, if this might be a possibility; or

- b. A statement that the subject's information or biospecimens collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, **will not be used or distributed** for future research studies.

11. For **FDA-regulated studies**, a statement that notes the possibility that the Food and Drug Administration may inspect the records;

12. For **applicable FDA-regulated clinical trials**, the following statement must be included verbatim:

"A description of this clinical trial will be available on <http://www.ClinicalTrials.gov>, as required by U.S. Law. This Web site will not include information that can identify you. At most, the Web site will include a summary of the results. You can search this Web site at any time."

### 1.5 Additional elements of informed consent to be applied, as appropriate:

1. A statement that the particular treatment or procedure may involve risks to the subject (or to the embryo or fetus, if the subject is or may become pregnant) which are currently unforeseeable;
2. Anticipated circumstances under which the subject's participation may be terminated by the investigator without regard to the subject's consent;
3. Any additional costs to the subject that may result from participation in the research;
4. When applicable, the amount and schedule of all payments
5. The consequences of a subject's decision to withdraw from the research and procedures for orderly termination of participation by the subject;
6. A statement that significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to the subject's willingness to continue participation will be provided to the subject;
7. The approximate number of subjects involved in the study.
8. A statement that the subject's biospecimens (even if identifiers are removed) may be used for commercial profit and whether the subject will or will not share in this commercial profit;
9. A statement regarding whether clinically relevant research results, including individual research results, will be disclosed to subjects, and if so, under what conditions;
10. For research involving biospecimens, whether the research will (if known) or might include whole genome sequencing (i.e., sequencing of a human germline or somatic specimen with the intent to generate the genome or exome sequence of that specimen).

### 1.6 Subject Withdrawal or Termination

A subject enrolled in a research study may decide to withdraw from the research, or an investigator may decide to terminate a subject's participation in research regardless of whether the subject wishes to continue participating. Investigators must plan for the possibility that subjects will withdraw from research and include

a discussion of what withdrawal will mean and how it will be handled in their research plans and consent documents.

When seeking informed consent from subjects, the following information regarding data retention and use must be included:

1. For FDA-regulated clinical trials: When a subject withdraws from a study, the data collected on the subject to the point of withdrawal remain part of the study database and may not be removed. This should be disclosed in the consent; or
2. For research not subject to FDA regulations: The investigator should inform subjects whether the investigator or study sponsor intends to either: (1) retain and analyze already collected data relating to the subject up to the time of subject withdrawal; or (2) honor a research subject's request that the investigator or study sponsor will destroy the subject's data or that the investigator or study sponsor will exclude the subject's data from any analysis.

When a subject's withdrawal request is limited to discontinuation of the primary interventional component of a research study, research activities involving other types of participation for which the subject previously gave consent may continue. Investigators should ask a subject who is withdrawing whether the subject wishes to participate in continued follow-up and further data collection subsequent to their withdrawal from the interventional portion of the study. Under this circumstance, the discussion with the subject would distinguish between study-related interventions and procedures and continued follow-up in person, by phone, or via records review.

If a subject withdraws from the interventional portion of the study, but agrees to continued follow-up as described in the previous paragraph, the investigator must obtain the subject's informed consent for this limited participation in the study (assuming such a situation was not described in the original consent document). IRB approval of consent documents for these purposes would be required.

If a subject withdraws from the interventional portion of a study and does not consent to continued follow-up, the investigator must not access or gather private information about the subject for purposes related to the study. However, an investigator may review study data related to the subject collected prior to the subject's withdrawal from the study, and may consult public records, such as those establishing survival status.

### **1.7 Documentation of Informed Consent**

Except as provided in Sections 15.10 and 15.11 of this document, informed consent must be documented by the use of a written consent form approved by the IRB.

1. Informed consent is documented by the use of a written consent form approved by the IRB and signed **(including in an electronic format)** and dated by the subject or the subject's LAR at the time of consent;
2. For research conducted in accordance with ICH-GCP E6 or in facilities subject to Joint Commission requirements, the name of the person who obtained consent and the date they did so is documented on the written consent form;

3. A **written** copy of the signed and dated consent form must be given to the person signing the form. The investigator should retain the signed original in the research records. When appropriate, a copy of the consent form is uploaded into the electronic health record;

The consent form may be either of the following:

1. A written consent document that embodies the basic and required additional elements of informed consent. **The investigator shall give either the subject or the subject's LAR adequate opportunity to read the informed consent form before it is signed; alternatively, this form may be read to the subject or the subject's legally authorized representative; or**

A short form written consent document stating that the elements of informed consent have been presented orally to the subject or the subject's LAR **and that the key required information was presented first to the subject, before other information, if any, was provided.** When this method is used:

- a. The oral presentation and the short form written document should be in a language understandable to the subject; and
- b. There must be a witness to the oral presentation; and
- c. The IRB must approve a written summary of what is to be said to the subject (the approved full consent document may serve as this summary); and
- d. The short form document is signed by the subject;
- e. The witness must sign both the short form and a copy of the summary; and
- f. The person actually obtaining consent must sign a copy of the summary; and
- g. A copy of the summary must be given to the subject or representative, in addition to a copy of the short form.
- h. When the short form procedure is used with subjects who do not speak or read English, or have [Limited English Proficiency](#) (LEP), (i) the oral presentation and the short form written document should be in a language understandable to the subject; (ii) the IRB-approved English language informed consent document may serve as the summary; (iii) the witness should be fluent in both English and the language of the subject. The witness to the consent process may be a member of the study team (in addition to the person obtaining consent); iv) for research subject to FDA regulation, FDA expects that the subject will be provided with a fully translated consent document as soon as possible.

The MaineHealth IRB has reviewed and approved the content of a template short form, and all translations of it.

## 1.8 Special Consent Circumstances

### 1.8.1 Enrollment of persons with Limited English Proficiency

- 1. Expected enrollment:** In some studies, the investigator may be able to anticipate enrollment of persons who do not speak or read, or have limited proficiency in, oral or written English. When the target subject population includes such persons or the investigator or the IRB otherwise anticipates that consent will be conducted in a language other than English, the IRB requires a translated consent document and other subject materials, as applicable. Generally, translated consent forms should not be prepared until the final approved version of the English-language version is available. To ensure that translated documents are accurate, the IRB may choose to require a certified translation, or have an independent back-translation.
- 2. Unexpected enrollment:** If a person who does not speak or read, or has limited proficiency in, English unexpectedly presents for possible enrollment, an IRB-approved translated version of the written consent may not be available for use. Investigators should carefully consider the ethical and legal ramifications of enrolling subjects when a language barrier exists. If the subject does not clearly understand the information presented during the consent process or in subsequent discussions, his/her consent may not be informed or legally effective.

If an investigator decides to enroll a subject into a study for which there is not an existing IRB-approved consent document in the prospective subject's language, the investigator must receive IRB approval to follow the procedures for a "short form" written consent in as described in Section 15.7.

- 3. Use of interpreters in the consent process:** An MaineHealth-certified interpreter (i.e., not a family member) should assist in presenting information and obtaining informed consent. Whenever possible, interpreters should be provided copies of the translated consent, or short form and the IRB-approved consent script (typically the English-language version of the consent document), well before (24 to 48 hours if possible) the consent discussion with the subject. The person obtaining consent must document that the "short form" process was used in the subject's research record, including the name of the interpreter.

#### 4. Braille consent

For blind subjects who read Braille, the IRB may approve a consent document prepared in Braille. To ensure that a Braille consent document is accurate, the IRB may require a transcription into print text or review of the document by an IRB member or other person who reads Braille. If possible, the subject will sign the Braille consent; otherwise oral consent will be obtained, witnessed and documented as described under "Oral Consent" (see Section 15.8.3).

### 1.8.2 Consenting in American Sign Language (ASL)

For deaf subjects who are fluent in ASL, the IRB may approve a consent process using ASL and the IRB-approved written consent form. When this process is approved, the individual authorized to consent

prospective subjects must use a certified interpreter fluent in ASL to conduct the consent process and the documentation of the consent process must conform to the requirements set forth in Section 15.7.

### **1.8.3 Oral Consent**

When subjects are unable to read a written consent form (such as blind or illiterate subjects), the IRB may approve an oral consent process, provided the subject (1) retains the ability to understand the concepts of the study and evaluate the risk and benefit of being in the study when it is explained orally and (2) is able to indicate approval or disapproval to study entry.

For research that is no more than minimal risk, documentation of consent may be waived according to the criteria in Section 15.10.

For greater than minimal risk research, the consent form must be read to the subjects and the subjects must be given an opportunity to ask questions. An audiotape approved by the IRB may also be used. If capable of doing so, the subject signs, or marks an X to signify consent. If that is not possible, the subject will provide oral consent. The person obtaining consent and a witness will sign the written study consent form with a statement that documents that an oral process was used and that the subject gave oral consent or made their mark. The consent process will also be documented in the subject's research record. Signed copies of the consent form are given to the subject and, whenever possible, these documents should be provided to the subject on audio or video-tape.

### **1.8.4 Physically-Challenged Subjects**

A person who is physically challenged (e.g., physically unable to talk or write) can enroll in research if competent and able to indicate voluntary consent to participate. Whenever possible, the subjects should sign the consent form or make their mark by initialing or making an X. As with oral consent, a witness to the consent process is recommended and the circumstances and consent process should be carefully documented in the research records.

### **1.8.5 Remote Consent Process**

The IRB may approve a process that allows the informed consent document to be delivered by an electronic platform (e.g., computer, tablet, smartphone), mail or facsimile to the potential subject or the potential subject's legally authorized representative and to conduct the consent interview by telephone or video consult. All other applicable conditions for documentation of informed consent must also be met when using this procedure.

## **1.9 Waiver or Alteration of Informed Consent**

*(For studies receiving initial approval on or before 1/20/19, please refer to SOP's available at [www.mmcri.org](http://www.mmcri.org) for content of this section).*

**General Waiver or Alteration:**

An IRB may waive the requirement to obtain informed consent, provided the IRB finds and documents that the below criteria are satisfied. Likewise, an IRB may approve a consent procedure that omits some, or alters some or all, of the basic and additional elements of informed consent (an “alteration”), provided that the IRB finds and documents that the below criteria are satisfied.

1. The research or clinical investigation involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects;
2. The research or clinical investigation could not practicably be carried out without **requested** waiver or alteration;
3. If the research involves using identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens, the research could not practicably be carried out without using such information or biospecimens in an identifiable format;
4. The waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects; and
5. Whenever appropriate, the subjects **or LARs** will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation.

This option applies to both FDA-regulated and DHHS-conducted or supported research.

#### **Public Benefit or Service Programs Waiver or Alterations**

An IRB may waive the requirement to obtain informed consent, provided the IRB finds and documents that the below criteria are satisfied. Likewise, an IRB may approve a consent procedure that omits some, or alters some or all, of the basic and additional elements of informed consent (an “alteration”) (See Sections 13.4 and 13.5), provided that the IRB finds and documents that the below criteria are satisfied.

1. The research or demonstration project is to be conducted by or subject to the approval of state or local government officials and is designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine:
  - a. Public benefit or service programs;
  - b. Procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs;
  - c. Possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or
  - d. Possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs; and
2. The research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration.

This option **does not** apply to FDA-regulated research.

#### **1.9.1 Screening, recruiting, or determining eligibility**

An IRB may approve a research proposal in which an investigator will obtain information or biospecimens for the purpose of screening, recruiting, or determining the eligibility of prospective subjects without the informed consent of the prospective subject or the subject’s legally authorized representative, if either of the following conditions are met:

1. The investigator will obtain information through oral or written communication with the prospective subject or legally authorized representative, or
2. The investigator will obtain identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens by accessing records or stored identifiable biospecimens.

### 1.10 Waiver of Documentation of Informed Consent

*(For studies receiving initial approval on or before 1/20/19, please refer to SOP's available at [www.mmcri.org](http://www.mmcri.org) for content of this section).*

The IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds **any of the following**:

1. The only record linking the subject and the research would be the **informed consent form** and the principal risk would be potential harm from a breach of confidentiality (e.g., domestic violence research where the primary risk is discovery by the abuser). **Each subject (or LAR)** must be asked whether they want documentation linking them with the research, and their wishes must govern.

This option **does not** apply to FDA-regulated research.

OR

2. The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context. Procedures such as non-sensitive surveys, questionnaires and interviews generally do not require written consent when conducted by non-investigators (e.g., marketing surveys, telemarketing).

This option **does** apply to FDA-regulated research (most commonly in the context of [minimal risk screening activities](#) that are necessary to determine eligibility for enrollment in a clinical trial.)

3. **If the subjects or LARs are members of a distinct cultural group or community in which signing forms is not the norm, that the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and provided there is an appropriate alternative mechanism for documenting that informed consent was obtained.**

This option **does not** apply to FDA-regulated research.

Unless the IRB has granted a full waiver of the requirement to obtain informed consent, investigators who seek and receive approval for a waiver of documentation of consent still must perform an appropriate consent process.

In cases in which the documentation requirement is waived, the IRB requires the investigator to provide in the application materials a written summary of the information to be communicated to the subject, and the IRB will consider whether to require the investigator to provide subjects with a written statement regarding the research.

## 1.11 Waiver of Informed Consent for Planned Emergency Research

The conduct of planned research in life-threatening emergencies where the requirement to obtain prospective informed consent has been waived by the IRB is covered by [21 CFR 50.24](#) for FDA-regulated research and by the waiver articulated by DHHS at [61 FR 51531-33](#) for research that is not FDA-regulated.

The FDA exception from informed consent requirements for emergency research under FDA regulations permits planned research in an emergency setting when human subjects who are in need of emergency medical intervention cannot provide legally effective informed consent themselves, and there is generally insufficient time and opportunity to locate and obtain consent from their legally authorized representatives (LARs).

The Secretary of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has implemented an Emergency Research Consent Waiver under [45 CFR 46.101\(i\)](#) with provisions equivalent to those of the FDA with the exception of the requirements specified in this section. The DHHS waiver is not applicable to research involving prisoners, pregnant women, fetuses, or in vitro fertilization.

### 1.11.1 Definitions

**Planned Emergency Research.** Research that involves subjects who, are in a life-threatening situation for which available therapies or diagnostics are unproven or unsatisfactory, and because of the subjects' medical condition and the unavailability of legally authorized representatives of the subjects, it is generally not possible to obtain legally effective informed consent.

**Family Member.** For this section means any one of the following adult and legally competent persons: spouses; parents; children (including adopted children); brothers, sisters, and spouses of brothers and sisters; and any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the subject is the equivalent of a family relationship.

### 1.11.2 Procedures

The IRB may approve the planned emergency research without requiring informed consent of all research subjects prior to initiating the research intervention if the IRB finds and documents that the following conditions have been met:

1. The human subjects are in a life-threatening situation, available treatments are unproven or unsatisfactory, and the collection of valid scientific evidence, which may include evidence obtained through randomized placebo-controlled investigations, is necessary to determine the safety and effectiveness of particular interventions.
2. Obtaining informed consent is not feasible because:
  - a. The subjects will not be able to give their informed consent as a result of their medical condition;
  - b. The intervention under investigation must be administered before consent from the subjects' legally authorized representatives is feasible; and

- c. There is no reasonable way to identify prospectively the individuals likely to become eligible for participation in the research.
3. Participation in the research holds out the prospect of direct benefit to the subjects because:
  - a. Subjects are facing a life-threatening situation that necessitates intervention;
  - b. Appropriate animal and other preclinical studies have been conducted, and the information derived from those studies and related evidence support the potential for the intervention to provide a direct benefit to the individual subjects; and
  - c. Risks associated with the research are reasonable in relation to what is known about the medical condition of the potential class of subjects, the risks and benefits of standard therapy, if any, and what is known about the risks and benefits of the proposed intervention or activity.
4. The research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver.
5. The proposed research plan defines the length of the potential therapeutic window based on scientific evidence, and the investigator has committed to attempting to contact a legally authorized representative for each subject within that window of time and, if feasible, to asking the legally authorized representative contacted for consent within that window rather than proceeding without consent. The investigator will summarize efforts made to contact legally authorized representatives and make this information available to the IRB at the time of continuing review.
6. The IRB has reviewed and approved informed consent procedures and an informed consent document consistent with Sections 46.116 and 46.117 of [45 CFR 46](#) and Sections 50.20, 50.25 and 50.27 of [21 CFR 50](#). These procedures and the informed consent document are to be used with subjects or their legally authorized representatives in situations where use of such procedures and documents is feasible. The IRB has reviewed and approved procedures and information to be used when providing an opportunity for a family member to object to a subject's participation in the research consistent.
7. Additional protections of the rights and welfare of the subjects will be provided, including, at least:
  - a. Consultation (including, where appropriate, consultation carried out by the IRB) with representatives of the communities in which the research will be conducted and from which the subjects will be drawn;
  - b. Public disclosure to the communities in which the research will be conducted and from which the subjects will be drawn, prior to initiation of the clinical investigation, of plans for the investigation and its risks and expected benefits;
  - c. Public disclosure of sufficient information following completion of the research to apprise the community and investigators of the study, including the demographic characteristics of the research population, and its results;
  - d. Establishment of an independent data monitoring committee to exercise oversight of the research; and

- e. If obtaining informed consent is not feasible and a legally authorized representative is not reasonably available, the investigator has committed, if feasible, to attempting to contact within the therapeutic window the subject's family member who is not a legally authorized representative, and asking whether he or she objects to the subject's participation in the research. The investigator will summarize efforts made to contact family members and make this information available to the IRB at the time of continuing review.

In addition, the IRB is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place to inform, at the earliest feasible opportunity, each subject, or if the subject remains incapacitated, a legally authorized representative of the subject, or if such a representative is not reasonably available, a family member, of the subject's inclusion in the research, the details of the research and other information contained in the informed consent document. The IRB shall also ensure that there is a procedure to inform the subject, or if the subject remains incapacitated, a legally authorized representative of the subject, or if such a representative is not reasonably available, a family member, that he or she may discontinue the subject's participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled. If a legally authorized representative or family member is told about the research and the subject's condition improves, the subject is also to be informed as soon as feasible. If a subject is entered into research with waived consent and the subject dies before a legally authorized representative or family member can be contacted, information about the research is to be provided to the subject's legally authorized representative or family member, if feasible.

#### **1.11.2.1 FDA-regulated Planned Emergency Research**

A licensed physician who is a member of or consultant to the IRB and who is not otherwise participating in the clinical investigation must concur that the conditions described in Section 15.11.2 are satisfied.

Studies involving an exception to the informed consent requirement under this section must be performed under a separate investigational new drug application (IND) or investigational device exemption (IDE) that clearly identifies that such studies may include subjects who are unable to consent. The submission of those studies in a separate IND/IDE is required even if an IND for the same drug product or an IDE for the same device already exists. Applications for such investigations may not be submitted as amendments under [312.30](#) or [812.35](#).

If an IRB determines that it cannot approve a clinical investigation because the investigation does not meet the criteria in the exception provided in the regulations or because of other relevant ethical concerns, the IRB must document its findings and provide these findings promptly in writing to the clinical investigator and to the sponsor of the clinical investigation. The sponsor of the clinical investigation must promptly disclose this information to FDA and to the sponsor's clinical investigators who are participating or are asked to participate in this or a substantially equivalent clinical investigation of the sponsor, and to other IRB's that have been, or are, asked to review this or a substantially equivalent investigation by that sponsor.

The IRB determinations and documentation required in this section 15.11 are to be retained by the IRB for at least 3 years after completion of the clinical investigation, and the records shall be accessible for inspection and copying by FDA in accordance with [56.115\(b\)](#).

### 1.11.2.2 Documentation and Reporting of Planned Emergency Research Not Subject to FDA Regulations

The IRB responsible for the review, approval, and continuing review of the research must approve both the research and a waiver of informed consent and have (i) found and documented that the research *is not subject* to regulations codified by the FDA at [21 CFR Part 50](#), and (ii) found and documented **and** reported to the OHRP that the conditions required Section 15.11 have been met relative to the research.

### 1.12 Posting of Clinical Trial Consent Forms

For each clinical trial conducted or supported by a Federal department or agency, one IRB approved informed consent form used to enroll subjects **must be posted by the awardee or the Federal department or agency component conducting the trial** on a publicly available Federal Web site that has been established as a repository for such informed consent forms (e.g., ClinicalTrials.gov or a docket folder on Regulations.gov)

If the Federal department or agency supporting or conducting the clinical trial determines that certain information should not be made publicly available on a Federal Web site (e.g. confidential commercial information), such Federal department or agency may permit or require redactions to the information posted.

The informed consent form must be posted on the Federal Web site after the clinical trial is closed to recruitment, and no later than 60 days after the last study visit by any subject, as required by the protocol.