

To: Interior Health Research Stakeholders

From: Dr. Deanne Taylor, Corporate Director, Research, Interior Health

Date: May 20, 2020

RE: Resumption of Non-COVID Research

On March 25, Interior Health (IH) issued a [COVID-19 Memo](#) suspending the initiation of new clinical trials/clinical research projects and halting recruitment for new and ongoing clinical trials/clinical research studies until further notice.

IH is implementing a multi-phase approach in alignment with provincial requirements and public health guidance to resume services with a focus on safety, standards and maintaining capacity to respond to potential future waves of COVID-19. The phased-in resumption of non-COVID research on an operational level is aligned with our organizational COVID-19 strategy and considers existing capacity available within operations across the health authority.

To re-start a current research study on hold due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions:

- 1) Notify the IH Research Ethics Board of the intention to re-start research activities:
 - For studies on RISE, submit an Amendment PAA informing of any updates to the application and confirming that the research team will remain in compliance with all applicable policies and guidance
 - For studies that are not on RISE, complete an [Amendments Application Form](#) and submit to researchethics@interiorhealth.ca
- 2) Notify the IH Research Department of the intention to re-start research activities by sending an email to research@interiorhealth.ca:
 - The Research Department will send you a study specific email link to the IH Operational Review for Study Re-Start form
 - Complete the Study Re-Start form and submit it by clicking on the “submit” button at the bottom of the form
 - The form will be reviewed by the IH Research Department and you will be contacted regarding the status of operational approval to re-start research activities

To initiate a new research study:

- 1) Submit an application for research ethics review to the IH Research Ethics Board:
 - Via RISE for harmonized, multi-jurisdictional studies
 - Via the [Application for Ethical Review Form](#) for single jurisdiction studies involving IH
- 2) Submit an application for IH Operational Approval via the [Study Intake Form](#).

General Considerations

- 1) Resumption of research activities in a given department or facility, or research that requires specific clinical or diagnostic services, is dependent on:
 - The scope and intensity of services required
 - Safety considerations (PPE, physical distancing, space requirements etc.)
 - Human, equipment or supply resources required
 - Phase of roll out of service expansion in the specific area
 - Operational and research ethics approval to re-start being granted

- 2) Non-COVID research must not introduce additional risk of COVID-19 transmission to staff, patients or families who are working in, or receiving services at IH facilities. Researchers, research team members and research participants must follow IH policies including but not limited to:
 - [AV0900 Management of Occupational Exposure to Communicable Diseases](#)
 - [AV1300 Staff Respiratory Infection Outbreak Management](#)
 - [AH0900 Visitation and Presence of Family and Partners-In-Care](#)

- 3) In addition to compliance with IH operational and clinical area considerations and policies, prioritization for resumption of non-COVID research include:
 - Risks of delaying research to patients/ population under study
 - Risks to integrity of research
 - Alignment with IH strategic and operational priorities
 - Mandated regulatory requirements
 - Research funding considerations

- 4) The Research Department provides services and supports to enable research:
 - Clinical trial support
 - Research and clinical trial agreements
 - Financial management/reporting
 - Patient engagement in research
 - Indigenous engagement in research
 - Knowledge translation/dissemination
 - Grant submission support
 - Research ethics submission support
 - Operational review
 - Data management services

The resumption of research activities may be impacted by future waves of COVID-19 that require the scale back of research again.

For information or support to re-start or initiate new non-COVID-19 research with Interior Health contact research@interiorhealth.ca