Title:	Annual Renewals
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Revised:	
Approved By:	REB Chair

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this guideline is to describe the policy for annual (interval) renewals and related continuing review prior to the expiration of the Humber River Health REB approval period.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The REB conducts continuing review of approved research taking place within its jurisdiction at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk to which participants are exposed, but not less than once per year. The Humber River Hospital REB makes the determination concerning the duration of the approval period and the interval by which continuing review must occur at the time of initial review and approval.

3.0 PROCEDURES

3.1 Annual Review of Research Involving Human Participants

Annual renewals are required of all investigators at a frequency determined by the REB at initial approval or subsequently by the Chair as deemed necessary. At minimum, the REB will require a report once per year. The research must be reviewed on or before the one-year anniversary date of the previous REB review, even though the research activity may not have begun until some time after the REB granted approval. Annual renewal must be submitted until all contact with study participants has concluded, all data have been collected and analyzed, and the objectives of the approved study are met to the extent possible. With few exceptions, renewals of research must continue until the letters of appreciation and lay summaries of findings are shared with participants.

Local Principal Investigators are required to submit a request for annual renewal and other materials as outlined on the Annual Renewal/Termination Report Form. The Annual Renewal/Termination Report Form should normally be submitted by the Local Principal Investigator 2-4 weeks before the study approval period ends.

3.2 Level of Review

Full REB review is the default requirement for renewals of research involving human participants at Humber River Hospital. If the annual renewal is brought to full REB, then the approval must take place at a convened meeting at which a REB quorum is present.

The authority to approve annual renewal may be delegated to the REB Chair or his/her designate when there has been little or no change in the ongoing investigation. If this criteria is met, the Chair or designate will review the annual renewal under the category of delegated review. The Chair or designate can at any time put a request for annual renewal forward for review by the convened Board.

Annual renewal will be reviewed by the Full Board if required by the study Sponsor, Funding Agency, or Regulatory Agency.

Annual review of studies funded by the US Federal Government or regulated by the US Food and Drug Administration must be reviewed by the fully convened Board unless they clearly meet the following criteria:

- The research is (i) permanently closed to the enrollment of new participants; (ii) all participants have completed all research related interventions; and (iii) the research remains active only or long-term follow up of participants; **OR**
- Where no participants have been enrolled and no additional risks have been identified; **OR**
- Where the remaining research activities are limited to data analysis.

3.3 Criteria for determining which projects require review more than annually

The Board will require annual renewal on an annual basis unless it designates otherwise. The Board considers the following when determining which projects require review more often than annually and in determining the appropriate interval for progress reporting:

- The nature of any risks posed by the research project;
- The degree of uncertainty regarding the risks involved;
- The vulnerability of the participant population;
- The experience of the investigators in conducting research;
- The REB's previous history with the investigators;
- The projected rate of enrollment; and
- Whether the research project involves novel interventions.

3.4 Annual Review of Research Content

Annual Renewal will include:

a) Any changes to the investigators' situation or qualifications
b) Current protocol version identifier
c) Current status of the study (what stage it is in at this site, at other sites, and what is left to accomplish)
d) Number of participants enrolled in the total study

e) Number of participants enrolled at this site
f) Number of participants withdrawn and reasons
g) Enrollment status compared to plans at the time of initial approval
h) Projected end of the study
i) Summary of all amendments since initial approval, protocol number and date, and the date of REB approval
j) A discussion of any difficulties in conducting the study including findings, study design, recruitment and data management
k) The current version of the consent and/or assent form(s)
l) Summary of all unanticipated problems, including serious and unexpected adverse events submitted to REB and current status of reactions
m) Any new information that would alter the REB's prior determination, particularly with respect to the REB's prior evaluation of the potential benefits or risks of the participants.

3.5 Criteria for Renewal

Annual renewal must be substantive and meaningful, the rigor of which shall be in accordance with a proportionate approach to ethics assessment.

In order for continuation of approval to be granted, the REB will determine that:

a) All of the requirements set forth for the initial approval of research continue to be satisfied.
b) There have been no changes to the investigators, study protocol, consent form, or consent process since the last Annual (Interval) Renewal unless these have been submitted as Amendments and approved.
c) There is no conflict of interest that has emerged since approval that might adversely affect the safety or well-being of study participants.
d) The risk to participants continues to be minimal and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
e) There is no new literature which might affect the willingness of study participants to participate.
f) There have been no complaints from study participants which require further investigation.
g) Number of participants enrolled, withdrawn, dropped out and completed

For regulated clinical trials, the reports of Data Safety Monitoring Boards and Sponsor-generated Safety Reports must also be favourable for continuation of the study.

3.6 Extensions of Approval Period

There is no grace period extending the conduct of the research beyond the expiration date of REB approval for regulated clinical trials. Extensions beyond the expiration date

will not be granted. If progress reports are not submitted as scheduled, the study will be suspended. No research related activities may occur after the approval expiration date unless the Local Principal Investigator contacts the Research Ethics Board and a determination is made that it is in the best interest of individual participants to continue during the lapse in REB approval.

The REB Office, in collaboration with the REB Chair, is fully authorized to do one or more of the following as deemed appropriate:

- Hold the review or approval of current or future submissions by the Local Principal Investigator until the status of the expired study has been addressed.
- Notify the funding agency, industry sponsor or the appropriate regulatory authority of the expiry of the ethics approval for the study.
- Notify financial accounts personnel to advise them that the study is no longer approved and that no further funds from the account should be released.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the investigators to provide in a timely manner the information needed by the REB to perform an annual review and any reminder notices regarding the need to do so from the REB to investigators are a courtesy.

Approximately 4-6 weeks before the annual renewal is due, the REB office will send the Investigator a reminder letter/email. The completed form should be submitted at least 2-4 weeks before the annual review date to ensure that appropriate REB review takes place prior to expiry to avoid interruption to the study.

3.7 The Point at which an Annual Renewal is no Longer Necessary

Annual renewal of a research project at least annually is required so long as the project continues to involve human participants and their research data. A research project continues to involve human participants as long as the investigators conducting the research continue to obtain;

- Data about the participants of the research through intervention or interaction with them
- Identifiable private information about the participants of the research (this includes obtaining biological specimens origination from living individuals)

Obtaining identifiable information includes:

- Collecting or receiving identifiable private information (including identifiable biological specimens) from any source (i.e., not already in the possession of the investigator);

- Collecting identifiable private information by observing or recording private behavior without interacting or intervening with the human participants; and
- Using, studying, or analyzing identifiable private information (including identifiable biological specimens), even if the information was already in the possession of the investigator before the research begins. This includes using, studying, or analyzing any of the following:

    - Identifiable private information obtained by interacting or intervening with the human participants;
    - Identifiable private information stored in documents, records, photographs, images, video recordings, or audio recordings provided to the investigators from any source;
    - Identifiable private information stored in documents, records, photographs, images, video recordings, or audio recordings already in the possession of the investigator before the research begins;
    - Identifiable private information obtained about an individual by interviewing other people (e.g., an individual's healthcare provider or teacher);
    - Identifiable biological specimens provided to the investigators from any source;
    - Identifiable biological specimens already in the possession of the investigator before the research begins.

A research project no longer involves human participants once the investigators have finished obtaining data through interaction or intervention with participants or obtaining identifiable private information about the participants, which includes the using, studying, or analyzing identifiable private information. Once all such activities described in the REB-approved protocol are finished and in most cases after a lay summary has been provided to research participants, the research project no longer needs to undergo annual renewal. At that point the investigator can make a formal request to the REB to close the file for that project. The investigator will be sent a closure letter once the request to close the study has been reviewed by the REB.

3.8 Documentation and Communication

Continuing review REB review activities will be documented, filed and retained per Research Ethics Office operational procedures. Research Ethics Board notice of continuing approval or changes required to obtain continuing approval will be distributed to investigators in a timely manner.

If the Annual Review Report is not received, reviewed and approved by the REB by the end of the approval period, the REB Chair/designee will determine the appropriate

action to take. This may include suspension of study activities and enrollment or closure of the study. Participants already enrolled in the study should receive appropriate medical care to ensure their safety and well-being. The REB Chair will decide whether prospective research data collection (except safety data) will be allowed and whether procedures that are being performed only for the purposes of the study should be undertaken until REB approval is reinstated.

If the Annual Review Report is not received by the end of the approval period, the REB office will send the Investigator a Reminder Email to submit the Annual Review Report. Failure to submit the Annual Review Report within the timeframe stated in the Reminder Email may result in closure of the study file. If it is determined by the REB Chair or designee to close the study, a Study Closure Letter will be sent to the Investigator.

For studies with Annual Reviews in progress, if no response is received within 3 months to REB queries relating to the Annual Review Report, a Reminder Email will be sent to the Investigator. Failure to respond to REB queries relating to the Annual Review Report within the timeframe stated in the Reminder Email may result in closure of the study file. If it is determined by the REB Chair or designee to close the study, a Study Closure Letter will be sent to the Investigator.

The investigator is responsible for promptly notifying the REB if there is a need to continue study-related medical treatment of current study participants for their safety and well-being. These activities will be documented and filed in the Research Ethics Office study file.

4.0 REFERENCES

1. Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans 2022 (TCPS2), Article 2.8 and 6.12.

2. The International Conference on Harmonization Good Clinical Practices, Sections 3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12.

3. US Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 45 Part 46.109, 46.111, 46.113, 46.115.

4. OHRP Guidance on Continuing Review.

5. US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) CFR Title 21 Part 56.108, 56.109, 56.110, 56.111, 56.115.

6. FDA Information Sheets: FAQ Section IV.