



CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Health Department

Interoffice

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From: ^{Initial}
 RM
 Dr. Renita Madu
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Date: December 23, 2024

CC: **Subject:** Institutional Review Committee

The Houston Health Department created an Institutional Review Committee (IRC), that has oversight and authority to approve or disapprove all requests for research with the department. The committee coordinates with the appropriate Deputy Director, Assistant Director or Bureau Chief, but ultimately the decision resides within the IRC Committee's purview. The Quality Council chaired by Dr. David Persse, Local Health Authority, has approved the IRC membership and the process. Dr. Banerjee is the Chairman of the Institutional Review Committee and Dr. Janeana White chairs the Research Misconduct Committee.

The IRC committee is a subcommittee of the Quality Council. The IRC is responsible for reviewing all requests for research within the department, on behalf of all divisions. These requests include but are not limited to requests that require IRB approval, some client/patient surveys, requests for extraction of data from any of our department information systems, including but not limited to EPIC, our electronic medical records, Client Trak, our case management system, MAVEN, our system for tracking surveillance data among others. The requests should come addressed to the IRC Committee. All pending requests should be sent to the IRC committee. All requests, all meeting minutes, all correspondence shall reside in the Quality Council SharePoint site, with restricted access.

The objective of this committee is to review and determine the feasibility of each request submitted and to ensure that it does not adversely impact client care or operations. The IRC shall confer with the impacted operational division, program or bureau before making a decision that impacts them. The IRC shall coordinate and inform the appropriate operational division, program or bureau in writing that they may be involved, to ensure that there is a transparent and objective process regarding the implementation of the IRC decision.

From here on in, the membership of the IRC shall constitute of: 1) *At least one member that is familiar with research protocol development and IRB/IRC processes* 2) *At least one member that closely works with populations that are termed "vulnerable"* 3) *HHD Privacy Officer* 4) *HHD Legal Officer* 5) *HHD Local Health Authority* 6) *At least one member to conduct QA for best practices for data confidentiality and storage.* 7) *Data Science designee* 8) *One member that manages all documentation. Note that members 1-7 are voting members.*

I sincerely appreciate your contribution to the Department and to the Quality Council, and I know that I can count on your dedication. I appreciate your willingness to work on this important task for the benefit of the department. If you have any questions regarding the IRC or the Research Misconduct Committee, please contact Dr. Deborah Banerjee directly. Dr. Banerjee will coordinate and identify meeting dates.