

Terms of Reference

CREBA was established by the Alberta Heritage Foundation of Alberta (AHFMR), which was proclaimed Alberta Innovates – Health Solutions as of January 1, 2010.

Creation of CREBA

There shall be a Committee/Board initially appointed by AHFMR known as the Community Research Ethics Review Board of Alberta.

Purpose

1. CREBA will review any community based project related to health that does not have access to review by another recognized public Research Ethics Board (REB) in Alberta.¹

Mandate

2. The Committee/Board shall act to:
 - a. Review ethics issues, including science, in research involving human health to ensure that it is designed to be beneficial and will minimize risk to the residents of the Province of Alberta.
 - b. Maintain ethical and scientific standards and guidelines for the conduct of health research and to contribute to the review of research proposals.
 - c. Ensure that the research meets standards of acceptability in terms of ethical and scientific considerations and relevance [either theoretical or practical] to community health.
 - d. Make decisions, based on ethical and scientific considerations, concerning proposals that come before the Board.
3. All research involving human participants requires ethical approval by a publicly constituted board. Every health region, organization and authority in Alberta needs to ensure that every such research proposal conducted within its jurisdiction, has received ethical approval. Recognizing that other ethical review processes exist in Alberta, this Board will concern itself with:
 - a. research which involves humans and related health issues;
 - b. research being conducted by those other than physicians in Alberta; and

¹ *The Health Research Ethics Board (University of Alberta), the Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board (University of Calgary), the Alberta Cancer Research Ethics Committee (Alberta Health Services), the Research Ethics Review Committee (College of Physicians and Surgeons), or the Human Subject Research Committee (University of Lethbridge).*

- c. research conducted by investigators not covered by the other legislated ethics boards in Alberta.

Collaboration will be sought among the other legislated research ethics boards when the proposals involve more than one jurisdiction.

CREBA may, at their discretion, provide consultative advice regarding ethical issues on projects in process.

CREBA will review protocols that require ethical review for funding. CREBA may choose to offer an ethical opinion (rather than approval) if funding is pending.

Guiding Principles

4. To enable all health research done in the community to receive ethical review.
5. The primary focus will be on the impact of health research on the individual and/or community.
6. To seek to review health research that may be linked to individuals and/or community by name or other means of identification.
7. Decisions made by the Board are conditional upon approval of scientific methodology by this Board or a body acceptable to the Board.
8. To preserve privacy, confidentiality, and dignity, in the process of conducting research in the community, while optimizing benefit and minimizing risk to physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of life.

Operations

9. The Board shall ensure a process of ethics review consistent with that laid out by the TCPS 2 - *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.
10. The Board may collaborate with recognized public REBs in order to develop and/or provide a uniform standard of ethics review involving appropriate consultation on community health issues.
11. Subject always to the direction of AIHS or its successor and these guidelines, the Board may conduct ethics review in such a manner and may adopt, use, and vary such programs and forms as it sees fit.
12. The Chair may appoint subcommittees of the Board as necessary to assist in the functioning of the Board, for example, Nomination Committees, Board Evaluation Committee, and Policy and Planning Committee.

Composition of the Board

14. Composition of the Board:

- (a) The Board shall be composed of not less than seven (7) members and not more than 11 members, including a Chair, not all of whom are of the same gender.
- (b) The Board shall have at least:
 - one member who is knowledgeable in the discipline of ethics
 - one member who is a lawyer
 - one member who is clergy
 - one member who is knowledgeable in human research methodologies
 - one member who is knowledgeable regarding medical terms and procedures
 - two members who are recruited from the communities served by CREBA and are knowledgeable about those perspectives
- (c) The Board shall be comprised of approximately 50% of members from Edmonton and/or Calgary and 50% from the rest of the Province.
- (d) The members will be appointed for four years. All members may serve additional terms of three years each, preferably with a one year overlap with their respective replacement to allow for mentoring into the role.
- (e) Only Board members, including the chair, have voting privileges.
- (f) The Board may add non-voting members and retain consultants and advisors or appoint subcommittees as is necessary to assist it in conducting ethics reviews.
- (g) The Board may from time to time appoint one or more of its members or other persons to review any applications and to provide reports for the advice of the Board.
- (h) A review of Board membership and functioning, including individual Board members, will be conducted annually.

Meetings

15. Board Meetings

- (a) The Board shall meet as frequently as necessary to prevent delays in the review process but not less than four times annually. The dates of meetings of the Board shall be appropriately announced.
- (b) If the Board has fewer than nine members, a minimum of five of the voting members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. If the Board has nine or more members, six voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- (c) A simple majority vote is required to pass a motion.

- (d) The Board shall be responsible for preparation of minutes of all meetings which shall clearly document decisions taken by the Board.
- (e) The decision-making process shall be guided by the principles set out by the TCPS 2 - *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* and shall, where possible, be based on a consensus of Board members. A majority vote will establish the Board decision on any application.
- (f) The Board may approve, refuse to approve or request modification of any research proposal submitted to it prior to approval.
- (g) There shall be paid to the members of the Board, both voting and non-voting, consultants and advisors retained by them, such fees for attendance and such reasonable traveling expenses as may be fixed by AIHS from time to time.
- (h) All expenses incurred by the Board shall be the responsibility of AIHS.

Reporting

16. The Board shall produce an annual report to be sent to the Corporation.