National Health Ethics Week
Semaine nationale de l'éthique de la santé

April/Avril
4 – 10, 2016

Research Ethics Bulletin #1: THE HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD (HREB)

The provincial Health Research Ethics Board (HREB) is established through legislation (the *Health Research Ethics Authority Act*) by the Health Research Ethics Authority (HREA). The creation of the HREB under the HREA Act resulted from a report in the late 1990's that investigated a case where an unethical research study was conducted by researchers from Baylor College of Medicine in Texas that took place in Grand Falls, NL with a family with high risk for a genetic heart defect. The research group was dubbed the 'Texas Vampires'. To access the final report for the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health and Community Services please visit: http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~alatus/benefitsharing/FinalReport.pdf.

The mandate of the HREA is to:

- Ensure the ethical and scientific acceptability of health research conducted with human research participants living in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The mandate of the HREB is to:

- Review health research on behalf of the HREA. The HREA Act requires all research with human participants living in Newfoundland and Labrador– whether that research is conducted by academic researchers, students, clinicians, or representatives of health agencies - to undergo review and approval by an HREA-approved research ethics board.
- Review health research on behalf of Memorial University. This is a service provided to all academic researchers and students of Memorial University and is not limited to research under the authority of HREA but includes health research conducted outside of the province by Memorial University researchers.

This includes a mandate to:

- Approve, reject, comment on and make recommendation for modification of research projects to meet the appropriate ethical standards (note that this may include comment on scientific method where it impacts the ethical aspects of the research).
- Provide, through the HREA, opportunities to researchers and research support staff for education in the ethical conduct of research.

The HREB has two subcommittees:

- **HREB-Clinical Trial Subcommittee (HREB-CT)** –responsible for reviewing clinical trials
- **HREB-Non-Clinical Trial Subcommittee (HREB-NCT)** –responsible for reviewing all health research other than clinical trials (including genetic research)

Membership of the two subcommittees can be found on the HREA website: www.hrea.ca.

HREB METRICS

2015: The HREB reviewed 304 new applications, 294 amendments and 494 annual renewals.
2016: In the first quarter of 2016 (January 1 – March 31), the HREBs have reviewed 114 new applications, 126 amendments and 155 annual renewals.

To volunteer with the HREB or for further information on the HREB review process please contact Sandra Veenstra, Ethics Director at ethicsdirector@hrea.ca or (709)777-8905.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR HREA HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS AUTHORITY

Canadian Bioethics Society / Société canadienne de bioéthique