

HREB ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Health Research Ethics Board (HREB), appointed by the Health Research Ethics Authority (HREA), is responsible for the ethical review, approval and subsequent monitoring of applications for health research projects involving human subjects in Newfoundland and Labrador. Currently, there are three HREB subcommittees; one for clinical trials (HREB-CT), one for genetics and genomics research (HREB-GG) and one for all other health research (HREB-NCT).

As per the HREB Terms of Reference, the following annual report has been prepared for HREA Board of Directors.

2. MEMBERSHIP

There was turnover in the HREB membership throughout the fiscal year. Each subcommittee remained compliant with Article 6.4 of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans, 2nd edition (TCPS 2)* and consisted of:

- a. at least two members with expertise in relevant research disciplines, fields and methodologies covered by the HREB;
- b. at least one member knowledgeable in ethics;
- c. at least one member knowledgeable in the relevant law, and
- d. at least one community member who has no affiliation with the institution.

The list of current HREB members is available on the HREA website under the HREB tab. The changes in membership between April 2023 and March 2024 were as follows:

New Members Added: 3

- Content Experts: 3

Member Resignations:

- Content Experts: 2
- Community Representative: 1

3. NEW APPLICATIONS

In the last fiscal year, the HREB adjudicated a total of 217 new research applications.

	HREB- CT	HREB- GG	HREB-NCT
Number of Applications Reviewed	45	10	162

4. CONTINUING REVIEW

Introduction: In the last fiscal year, the HREB adjudicated a grand total of 1806 events. The breakdown of these events is as follows:

Event	Quantity
Serious Adverse Event	50
Amendment	496
Ethics Renewal/ Study Close Out	571
Investigator Brochure	50
Other Form	83
Product Monograph	14
Protocol Deviation	146
Research Staff Change	326
Safety Report	67
Sponsor Add/Change	3
TOTAL	1806

5. OPERATIONS

HREB meetings are scheduled biweekly and are facilitated via distance technologies as required. No HREB meetings are scheduled during Memorial University’s Christmas break, which occurred between December 25, 2023 to January 2, 2024. Accordingly, no HREB-GG or HREB-NCT meetings were scheduled for that week.

The meeting activity for the 2023-24 fiscal year was as follows:

	HREB- CT	HREB- GG	HREB-NCT
Total Meetings Scheduled	26	25	25
Total Meetings Canceled *	1	18	4
Total Meetings Held	25	7	21

**Meetings cancelled due to absence of studies requiring full Board review.*

6. CHAIR COMMENTS

This was another successful year thanks to the dedicated staff at the HREA/B office. A special thanks to Barb and Rob (Ethics Officers), and Kayla and Joan (doing the 'behind the scenes' administration). They consistently went above and beyond to keep the work of the REBs running efficiently. Their support and guidance to researchers, Board members, and of course to us Chairs has been most appreciated. We've had some changes with the HREA Director, with Krista pursuing a new career and Sharon stepping back in to fill that void – fortunately these two women are such stellar Directors that the work of the HREBs continued seamlessly. In the new fiscal year we have welcomed two new ethics officers, with Barb now as Director. As much as we'll miss Rob and Barb as EOs, we have every confidence that the new crew will be as effective and supportive as the old guard had been.

As Chairs of the three REBs, we continue to be overwhelmed by the tremendous dedication of the volunteer researchers, clinicians, lawyers and ethicists who comprise the review Boards. As we look back over the year, it is with an overwhelming sense of appreciation and respect for these devoted volunteers. We cannot over-emphasise that any acclaim for successes the HREBs have seen over this past year must – as always – rest primarily with them.

Fern Brunger (Chair, NCT) on behalf of Dr. Debra Bergstrom (Chair, GG), Dr. Peter Daley (Co-Chair, CT), and Dr. Joy Maddigan (Co-Chair, CT).

