Resuming “in-person” human subjects research at LSU:
A guide for Researchers
Original: 8/17/2020
Revised: 7/8/2021

Rationale: COVID-19 has dramatically changed the potential risk individuals encounter in their daily life. Resuming “in person” human subjects research does not inherently exceed this “minimal risk” so long as

a) Researchers and subjects are aware of these potential risks.
b) Appropriate precautions are taken to minimize these risks to research subjects

COVID-19 related risks: There are two chief risks with resuming “in person” research. First involves potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus. In order to mitigate this, researchers must adhere to all relevant CDC, Louisiana Department of Health and LSU guidelines. These guidelines will likely evolve over time, and researchers should be aware of changes and update their protocols accordingly.

A second source of risk stems from mitigation strategies aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19. At present, LSU researchers, students employees and visitors should comply with daily symptom checklists, reporting of positive test results, contact tracing, and isolation/quarantine guidelines. If study personnel, for example, tests positive for COVID-19, immediate isolation may be mandated for that individual and anyone they were in close contact with. Without appropriate safeguards, a single positive case can lead to isolation/quarantine for an entire network of research assistants, subjects, peers, friends and family.

IRB Protocols: If you are conducting “in-person” human subjects research while under threat of COVID-19, you will be asked to address these potential risks. This can be provided in modification to an existing protocol or in a new IRB application.

In your documents, please:

- Confirm that you will comply with all relevant CDC, Louisiana Department of Health and LSU guidelines and you will monitor these agencies for updates.
- Ensure that your research methods address general health and safety guidelines as needed. This plan could include relevant prescreening, disinfecting, distancing, isolation/quarantine, and documenting, encouraging or requiring vaccines.
- Provide a plan for ensuring potential subjects are aware of risks (e.g., isolation/quarantine guidelines) as needed. This can be provided in a supplemental handout. Changes to the consent are typically not necessary.
- Note the potential screening, involvement and need for additional risk mitigation strategies for “high-risk” individuals (as defined by LSU, LA DHH, and CDC), when appropriate.

Note: For updates regarding campus operations during the pandemic, including vaccines, mask requirement, testing resources, and protocols, see the LSU Roadmap at: https://lsu.edu/roadmap/

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