

March 14, 2020

Considerations for Human Subjects Research at SMCM During COVID-19 Pandemic

At this time, St. Mary's College's Institutional Review Board (IRB) remains operational. We will continue to review research proposals and respond to questions or concerns throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. If you have research planned or underway, or if you are a co-investigator on a student project that has IRB approval, please take note of the following:

IN-PERSON RESEARCH: If you have ongoing research that involves in-person, face-to-face human interactions, you should take immediate steps to temporarily suspend those human subjects interactions. You do not need to notify the IRB of this change. Please wait until further notice from the IRB before re-engaging in in-person interactions with human subjects.

If you currently have in-person interactions scheduled with participants, but you would like to continue research through alternative means (e.g., video conference, phone), you must submit a request for a modification of your procedures to the IRB before implementing those changes. To do so, resubmit the original protocol with all changes in red to irb@smcm.edu. Please name the file with your IRB identifier followed by the word "amended" (e.g., SP20_10amended).

If your research requires continuation of in-person methods because of grant timelines or time-sensitive follow-up procedures, please temporarily suspend the research and contact the chairs of the IRB to discuss the options.

ONLINE RESEARCH: Investigators may continue to conduct online research studies without interruption.

Regardless of the type of research you are engaging in, this is also a time to be particularly sensitive to the needs of participants who may want to avoid interactions or not participate in research studies that they had previously agreed to. Remind them when following up about participation or during the consent process that their decision to postpone or not to participate will not jeopardize their future relations with St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Questions can be directed to the IRB co-chairs, Dr. Jennifer Tickle (jjtickle@smcm.edu) and Dr. David Morris (dbmorris@smcm.edu).

Thank you,
St. Mary's College of Maryland IRB