Where to Apply - Human Health Research Ethics Approval in Alberta

Research involving human participants and their health information (diagnostic, treatment and care information as defined by the Act) must receive ethics approval from a Health Information Act-designated Research Ethics Board (HIA-designated REB) prior to initiating the research.

Which REB do you submit your application to?*

Health Research Ethics Board of Alberta (HREBA), Alberta Innovates	Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board (CHREB), University of Calgary	Health Research Ethics Board (HREB), University of Alberta
*Cancer Committee*** The Cancer Committee reviews all protocols focused on the study of cancer or the treatment of cancer patients conducted by Principal Investigators from the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health and/or the community.	Excluding cancer-related studies, CHREB reviews all human participant health research where the Principal Investigator is conducting the research: i) as an employee of the University holding an academic appointment (Continuing, Limited Term, Contingent Term or Sessional); ii) as an employee of the University not holding an academic appointment but required to initiate and perform research in accordance with their conditions of employment; and iii) as a non-employee of the University holding a clinical or adjunct appointment	Excluding cancer-related studies, HREB reviews all human participant health research where the Principal Investigator is conducting the research: i) as an employee of the University ii) as a student of the University iii) as an Alberta Health Services employee in the Edmonton and North Zones or using AHS resources or facilities in those zones (Zones 4 and 5) iv) as an Covenant Health employee in Alberta or using Covenant Health resources or facilities v) as an employee or student of the University of Lethbridge
Clinical Trials Committee The Clinical Trials Committee reviews clinical trials, excluding cancer-related studies, conducted by physicians and other qualified health professionals who are not conducting the research as part of their employment with the University of Alberta or the University of Calgary or Covenant Health or Alberta Health Services (Zones 4 and 5).		
Community Health Committee The Community Health Committee reviews health studies, neither clinical trials nor cancer-related, conducted by Principal Investigators who are not conducting the research as part of their employment with the University of Alberta or the University of Calgary or Covenant Health or Alberta Health Services (Zones 4 and 5).		

*The details are set out in Schedule A - Review Priorities of the Research Ethics Reciprocity Agreement, 2014-03-07.
** Refer to www.hreba.ca for updates on when the HREBA – Cancer Committee will begin accepting all cancer studies.

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"Cancer-related Studies" means studies primarily focused on **the study of cancer or treatment of cancer patients** this includes, but is not limited to:

1. Clinical trials in patients with a cancer diagnosis;
2. Studies evaluating, assessing or describing the clinical care (including palliative and psychosocial well-being) and management of patients with cancer;
3. Studies where the participants are identified/recruited using cancer registries or bio-repositories in Alberta or elsewhere;
4. Studies seeking to draw samples or data for secondary use from established cancer data or bio-repositories

Consultation Process - For cases where it is unclear to which REB an applicant should apply, it is proposed:

1. That all three Research Ethics Offices (REO) use Guiding Principles to advise applicants to which REB they must submit an application, on a case by case basis, thereby avoiding the provision of conflicting advice or the need for researchers to resubmit an application initially entered on the incorrect platform (IRISS or REMO);
2. Where an applicant proceeds in accordance with such advice the receiving board shall be considered to be the appropriate board for that particular application, and its determinations shall be accepted by the other boards pursuant to the terms of the reciprocity agreement. Any outstanding concerns will be discussed as set out in (3) and (4) below;
3. That these discussions focus on "what is possible" and "what is reasonable" at the REO level, in consultation with appropriate Chairs, as needed;
4. That a record of decisions be kept for future guidance and reference.

Important Note - The role of a Research Ethics Board with respect to personal health information access is to determine whether or not participant consent is required. The release of records must be negotiated with the custodian (AHS) and executed in a research agreement. In addition, research ethics approval does not encompass any operational approval such as authorization to access patients, staff or resources of Alberta Health Services or other institutions.

If you are not certain which REB should review your research, contact any of the following people for additional information:

CHREB	**HREB**	**HREBA**
chreb@ucalgary.ca	Kim Kordov kordov@ualberta.ca	Wendy Burrill wendy.burrill@albertainnovates.ca