



OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH
119 CALIFORNIA HALL #1500
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720-1500

March 13, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 and Human Subjects Research

Dear UC Berkeley Researcher:

Due to the rapidly evolving concerns and risks related to the COVID-19 outbreak, the UC Berkeley Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) and Randy Katz, the Vice Chancellor for Research (VCR), are recommending that study investigators plan to take and implement specific actions to limit transmission of the virus by delaying or otherwise modifying non-essential interactions with human subject research participants. In particular, we recommend that PIs conducting research involving group meetings or appointments – especially with subject populations who may be more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus – consider delaying these procedures or using alternative interactions via electronic means if possible.

However, please do not feel you should modify or delay any research interventions *that are in a subject's best interest*, unless you believe the COVID-19 risks are likely to outweigh the intrinsic benefit to subjects from participating in the research.

Should you decide to modify your protocol to reduce potential COVID-19 exposure of subjects or staff, please do so without waiting for CPHS (IRB) approval. The OPHS will process all amendments as quickly as possible, but you should feel free to make risk-reduction changes as quickly as is feasible. You should file a protocol amendment and, if you change your protocol prior to review and approval, submit a deviation report to CPHS/OPHS as soon as you can. Any infection-reducing deviations will be viewed as minor.

If you are planning to personally interact with human research participants due to essential and/or time sensitive data collection, it is wise to screen them in advance of meeting for current symptoms of COVID-19 including fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, and muscle aches. In addition, information on recent travel by the subject to CDC level 3 countries (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>) should also be collected and contact with such travelers should be avoided. Subjects should be informed that this screening information will only be used to determine eligibility to participate and will be destroyed shortly after their participation in the study is concluded. However, individuals with any of the above symptoms should not be brought to campus. Instead you should advise them to review health precautions contained on the CDC's COVID-19 webpage (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>), including to contact their healthcare provider for medical advice.

COVID-19 and Human Subjects Research

March 13, 2020

Page 2 of 2

For more information or if you have questions contact the OPHS at OPHS@berkeley.edu. Please do not call the office as all staff are working from home.

Keep your research subjects safe and stay healthy yourself!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Howard Katz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "K" at the end.

Randy Howard Katz
Vice Chancellor for Research

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Jagust". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "J" at the end.

William Jagust
Chair, CPHS-1

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Mauldon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "M" at the end.

Jane Mauldon
Chair, CPHS-2